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From field medicine to facelifts

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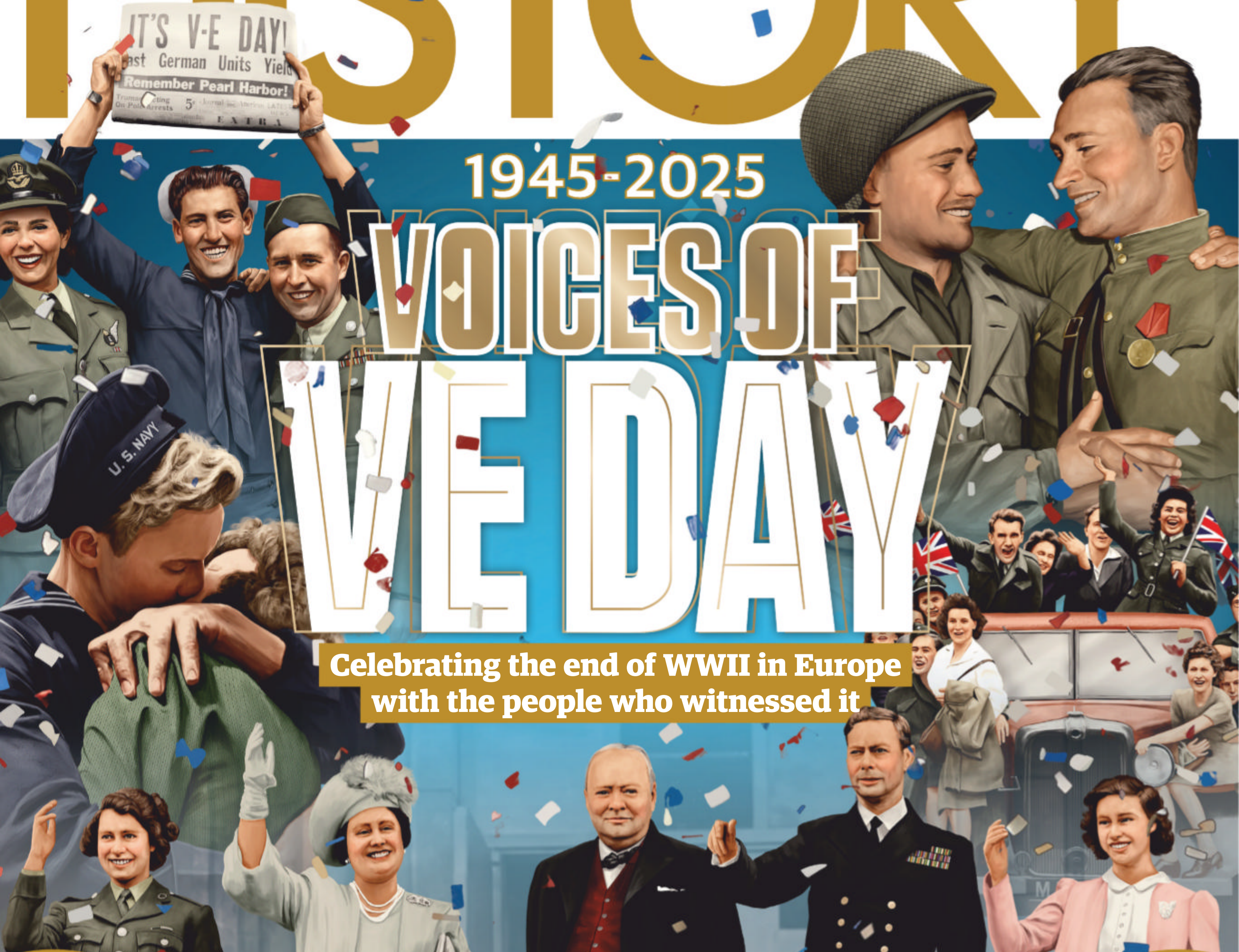
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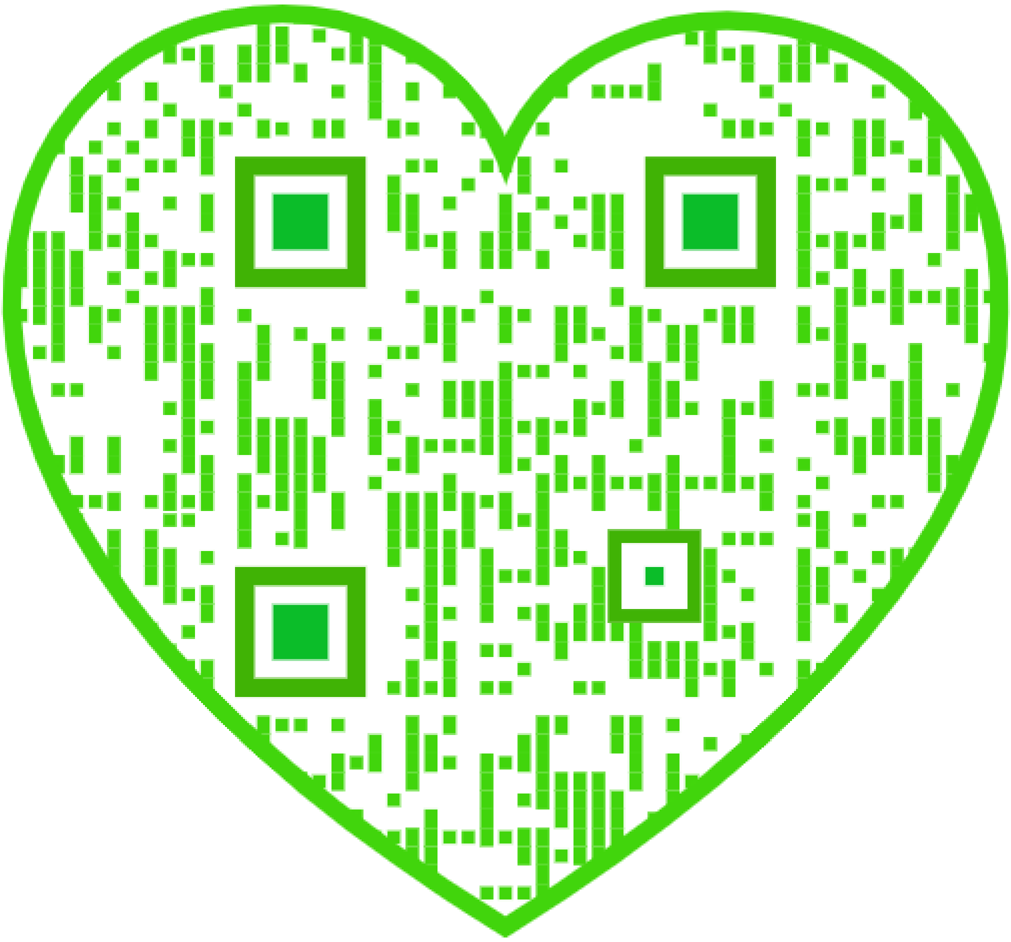

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A crowd celebrating VE Day on 8 May 1945

Welcome

Five years ago I wrote on this very page about how images from VE Day could be so moving, thinking about how the people pictured were finally being released from a dark period in their lives. What I didn't know as I wrote that was that we were about to face our own challenging period of fear, concern and loss. Thankfully the lockdowns of Covid-19 were nothing like living through The Blitz. Nonetheless, we all felt a great sense of relief as the world began to open up again, as vaccines rolled out and we could begin to look ahead. It's easier now to understand how cathartic it must have been for the people who danced and sang in the streets of London, Liverpool, Manchester, Paris, New York and beyond on 8 May 1945.

Since we've discussed the finer details of the peace before, we wanted to get down to those streets and find eyewitness accounts of VE Day from the people who were there. We also welcome Geraint Jones and Lucy Noakes to give us expert insight on soldiers and civilians respectively. Elsewhere we delve into the criminal mind of Jesse James, learn about Rome's African emperor and discover the troubles faced by the illegitimate children of British kings. I hope you enjoy the issue.

Jonathan Gordon
Editor

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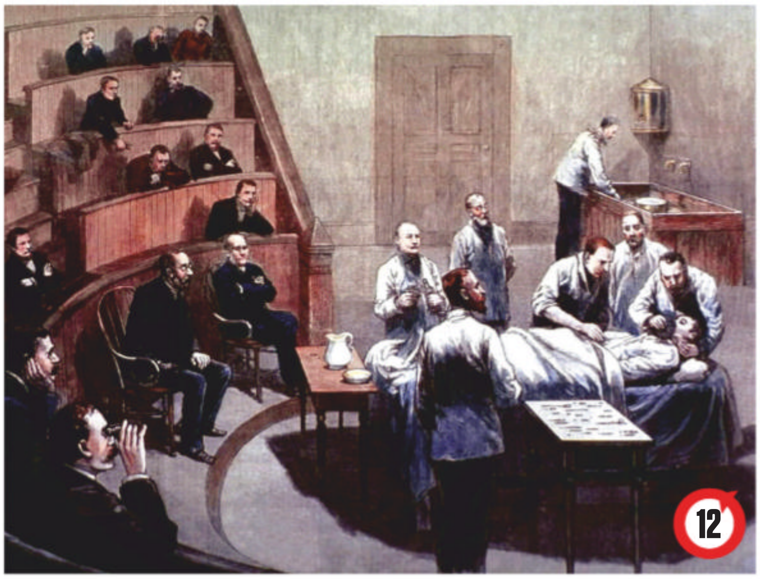

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VOICES OF VE DAY

Celebrating the end of WWII in Europe with the people who witnessed it

Defining Moments

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18-19 April 1956

GRACE KELLY MARRIES PRINCE RAINIER OF MONACO

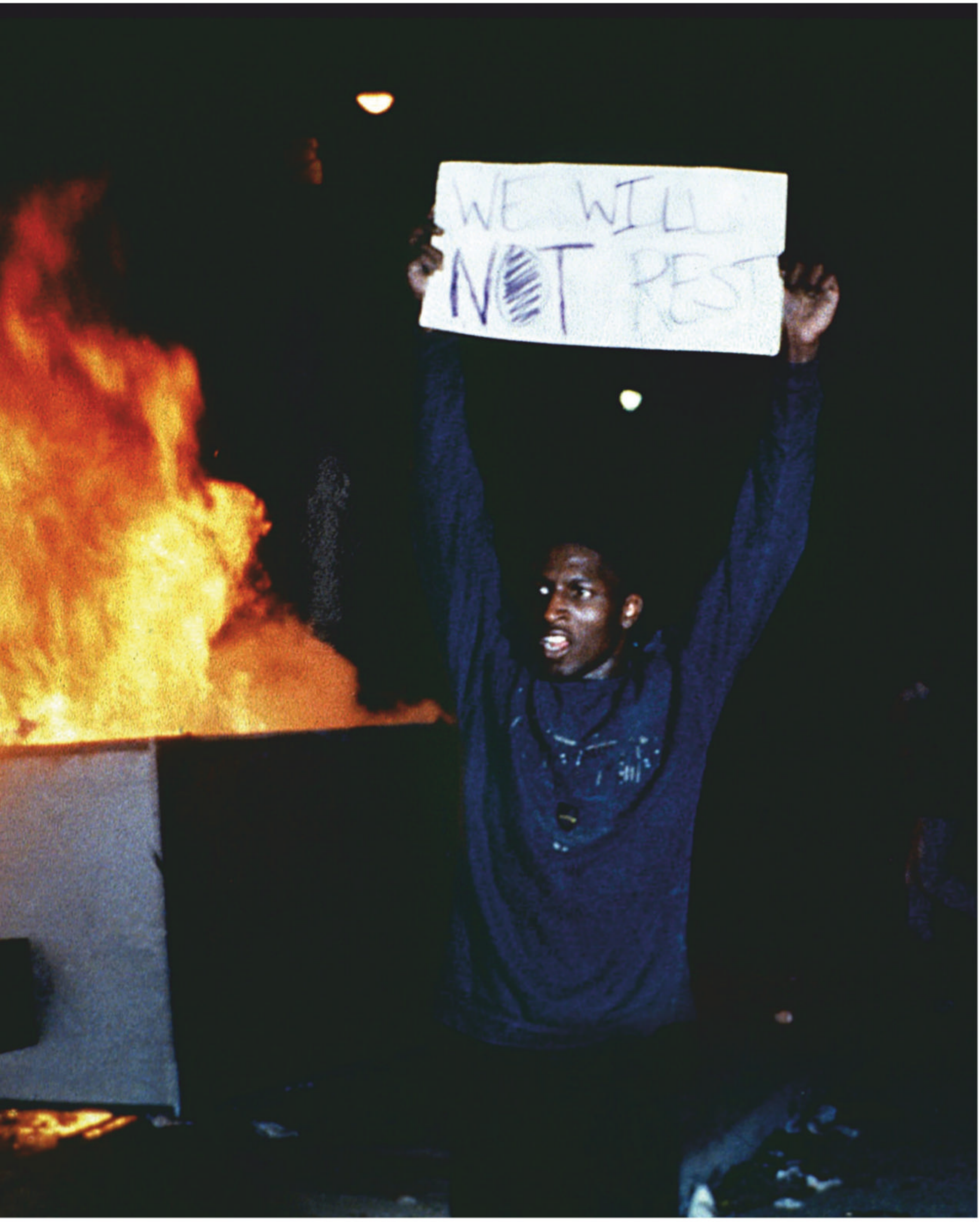
After meeting the previous year at the Cannes Film Festival, Hollywood actress Grace Kelly tied the knot with Rainier III, Prince of Monaco. As dictated by the sovereign principality's tradition, the royal wedding took place over two days: a civil ceremony at the prince's Palace of Monaco was followed by a religious service at the Cathedral of St Nicholas the next day. The wedding was televised around the world and watched by an estimated 30 million people.

© Getty Images

29 April 1992

LOS ANGELES RIOTS BREAK OUT

In March 1991, African-American Rodney King was severely beaten during his arrest by Los Angeles Police Department officers. The incident was captured on video camera by an onlooker and the four policemen were charged with assault and using excessive force. They were acquitted on 29 April 1992, sparking outrage across LA. For six days, thousands of rioters took to the streets, causing damage estimated at around $1 billion. 63 people were killed and 2,383 injured.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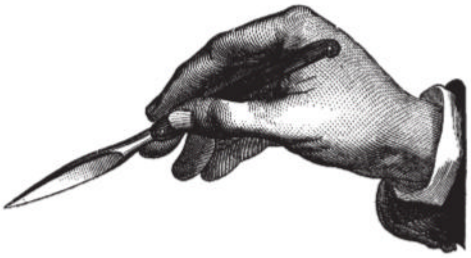

From the earliest evidence of amputation to the first artificial heart, we track the evolution of medical science

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THE FIRST PLASTIC SURGEON

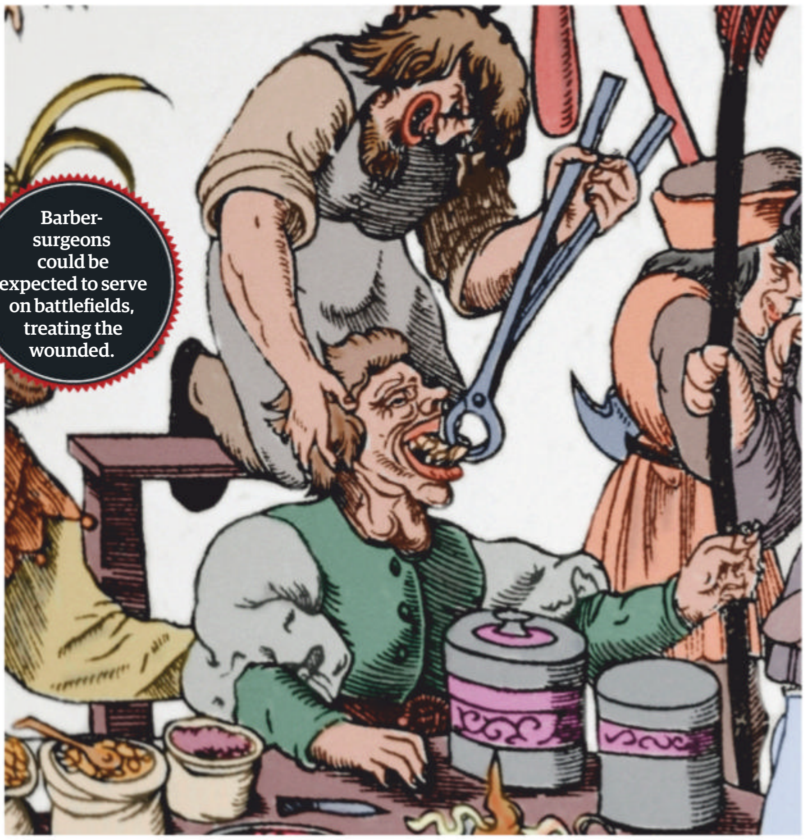
Main image: © Getty Images

Written by Emily Staniforth, Callum McKelvie, Jonathan Gordon

Key Events

1750 BCE ANCIENT MALPRACTICE

Among the many laws set out by the Babylonian *Code of Hammurabi* are rules for the practice of surgeons. These include regulations for their conduct, rules around malpractice and guidance for compensation for victims of surgical errors, based on the social status of the patient.



Barber-surgeons could be expected to serve on battlefields, treating the wounded.

1540 BARBER SURGEONS

The Company of Barber-Surgeons is established as a trade guild by an Act of Parliament defining the roles of each type of travelling salesperson. Neither barbers nor surgeons are permitted to perform the role of the other, although both may pull teeth. Surgeons finally break away in 1745.

EARLY AMPUTATION
C.28,000 BCE

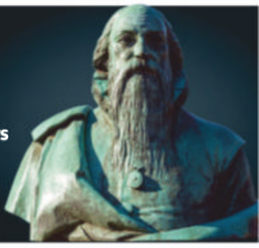
Remains discovered in Borneo point to the first known example of a successful amputation. The patient is a child whose bones show signs of further growth, post-surgery.

WORKS OF AL-ZAHRAWI
950

Al-Zahrawi, also known as Abulcasis, records his 30-volume medical encyclopedia, *Al-Tasrif*. Three of the books discuss surgery techniques used for years to come.

GANGRENE AMPUTATIONS 1630

Amputation becomes the standard treatment for sufferers of gangrene after pioneering operations by Wilhelm Fabry, the 'Father of German Surgery'.

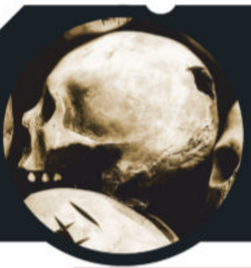


1750 BCE

1550 BCE

600 BCE

1540



TREPANATION 6500 BCE

Archaeological evidence in France points to the use of trepanation – the practice of drilling holes into the human skull – in early communities in the region.

PAPAL DOCTOR 1363

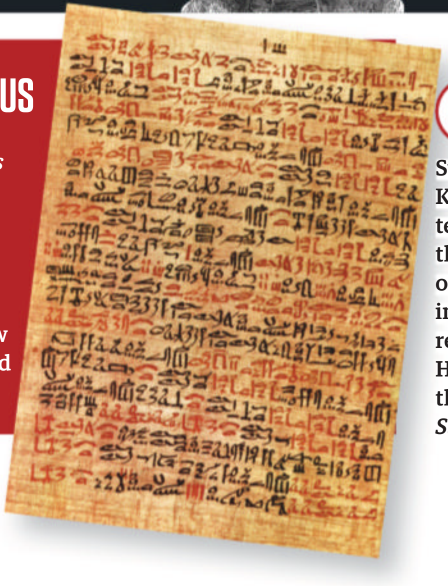
Guy de Chauliac, a papal physician originally from France, writes *Chirurgia Magna* (*Great Surgery*), which becomes the preeminent guide for surgeons. The text remains in use until the 17th century.

WOMEN'S HEALTH 1818

James Blundell pioneers medical procedures for women, performing the first successful blood transfusion for a postpartum hemorrhage, and ten years later the first transvaginal hysterectomy.

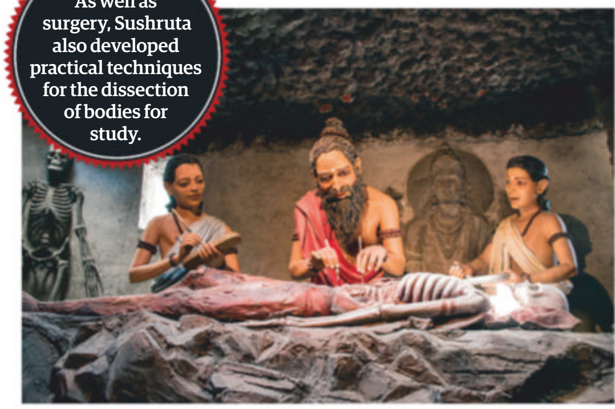
1550 BCE EBERS PAPYRUS

Ancient Egyptian surgeons record the *Ebers Papyrus*, one of history's earliest medical treatises. Among its many surgical instructions and 700 'magical' formulas, it includes guidance for how to treat crocodile bites and attend to burns.



600 BCE INDIAN PIONEER

Indian surgeon Sushruta, operating in Kashi, pioneers a number of techniques, particularly in the fields of reconstructive, or 'plastic', surgery. This includes repairing and remaking a patient's nose. His work is recorded in the medical compendium *Sushruta Samhita*.



As well as surgery, Sushruta also developed practical techniques for the dissection of bodies for study.

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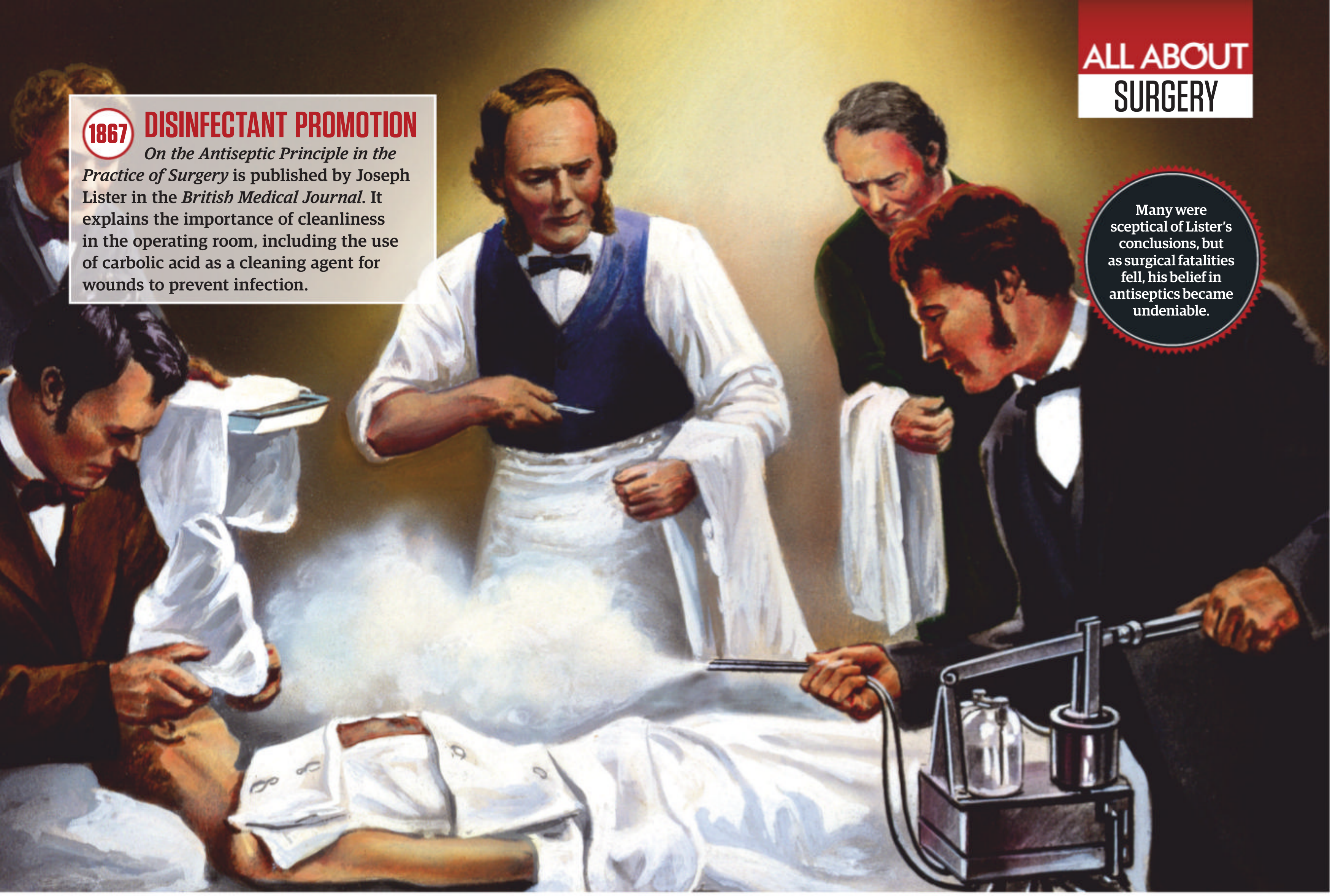
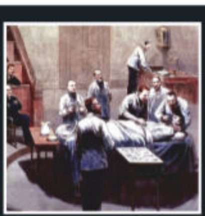


1867 DISINFECTANT PROMOTION

On the Antiseptic Principle in the Practice of Surgery is published by Joseph Lister in the *British Medical Journal*. It explains the importance of cleanliness in the operating room, including the use of carbolic acid as a cleaning agent for wounds to prevent infection.

Many were sceptical of Lister's conclusions, but as surgical fatalities fell, his belief in antiseptics became undeniable.

ETHER 1846



The use of ether is demonstrated publicly for the first time, in a surgery by William TG Morton. He removes a neck tumour from a patient at the Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston.

FIRST FEMALE SURGEON 1855

Mary Edwards Walker becomes the second woman and first surgeon to graduate from medical school in the United States. She serves as a US Army surgeon during the Civil War, earning a Medal of Honor.

1867

1893

PLASTIC SURGERY 1917

Harold Gillies pioneers new techniques for treating facial injuries, grafting skin for a burned sailor named Walter Yeo, leading to further advances in such treatments.

BYPASS MACHINE 1953

A heart-lung machine, known as a cardiopulmonary bypass (CPB), is used successfully for the first time, in a surgery conducted by John Gibbon at Thomas Jefferson Medical College Hospital in Philadelphia.

KIDNEY TRANSPLANT 1954

Richard Henrick is the first person to receive a living donor kidney transplant. His identical twin brother, Ronald, is the donor and the procedure is conducted by Dr Joseph Murray at Peter Bent Hospital in Boston.

KEYHOLE SURGERY 1980

The first 'keyhole' surgery is performed by Kurt Semm, who completes an appendectomy using minimally invasive laparoscopic surgery.

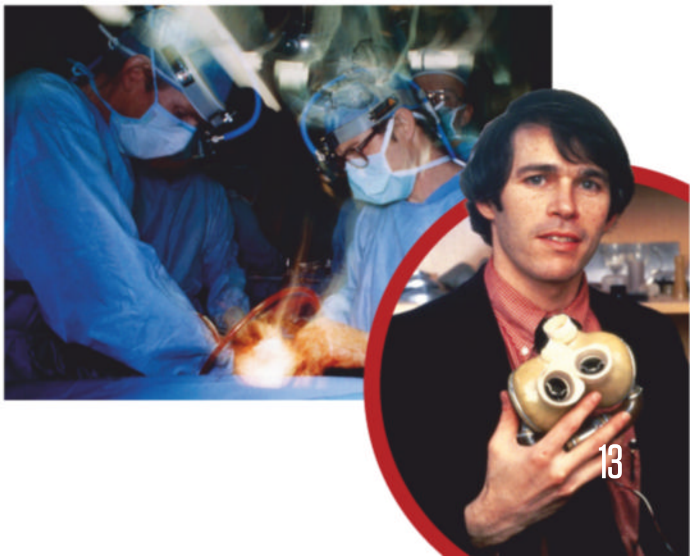
1982

1893 HEART SURGERY

The first successful heart surgery is performed by Daniel Hale Williams, the founder of the first Black-owned hospital in America, the Provident Hospital and Training School for Nurses. The operation is to repair a defect in the pericardium, the membrane encasing the heart.

1982 ROBOT HEART

The first permanent artificial heart is successfully implanted into a terminally ill patient by William DeVries of the University of Utah Hospital. The heart is called the Jarvik-7, named after its creator, Robert Jarvik (far right), also of the University of Utah.



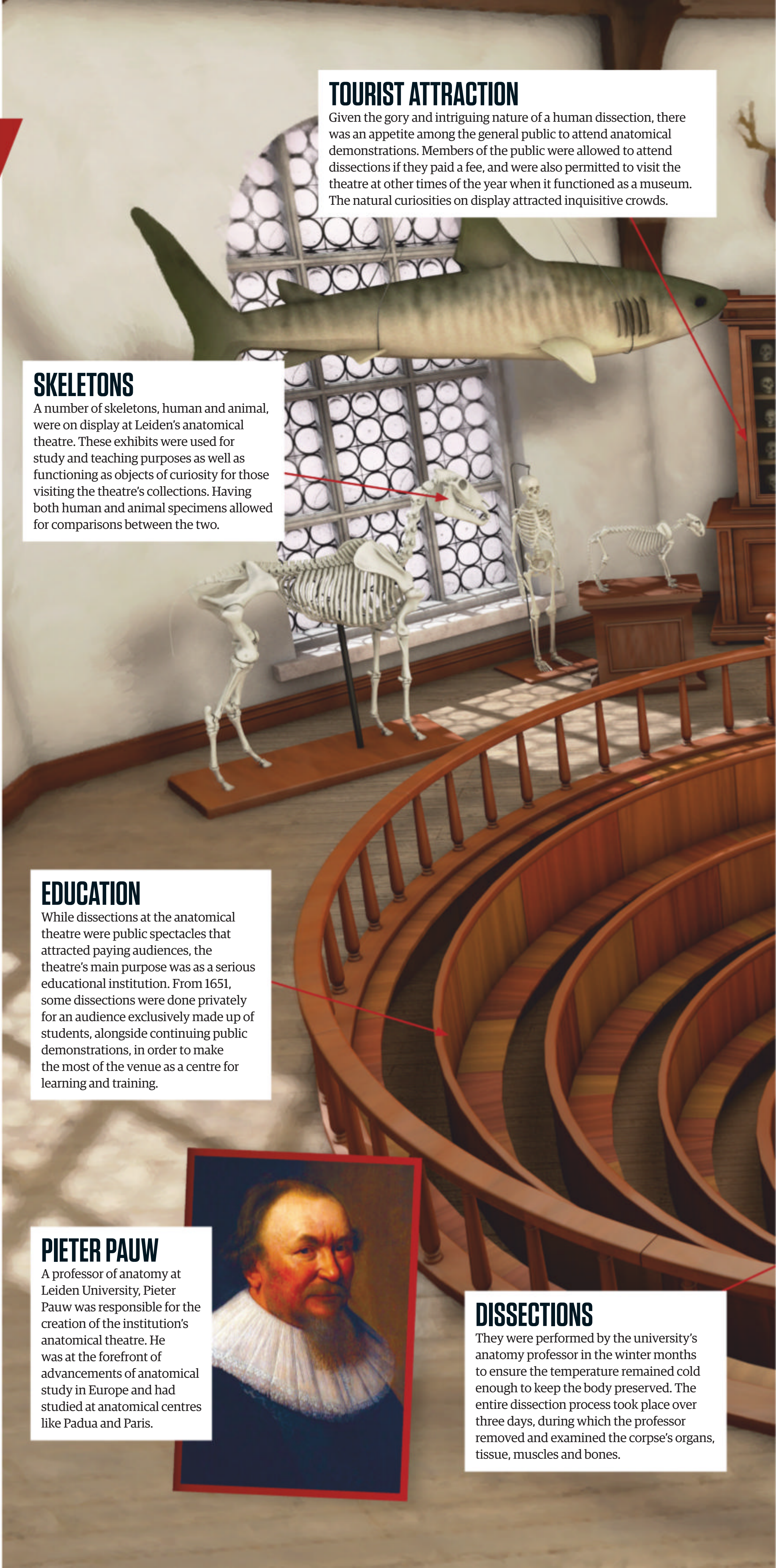
ANATOMICAL THEATRE

Leiden, The Netherlands 1597-1821

The development of scientific thinking, curiosity and advancement in the late Middle Ages led to a new way of exploring and learning about the human body. Studying anatomy became a key component of medical education and dissection was seen as the best way to understand how the body worked. Traditionally, anatomy had been learned through the examination and study of ancient medical texts rather than through dissections, but all this changed with the establishment of Europe's first anatomical theatres.

Scholars at the University of Bologna in northern Italy had been known to perform anatomical dissections as early as the 13th century and this method of teaching students gradually became more widespread throughout Europe. In teaching scenarios, dissections were usually performed by one person as a group of students watched. The first anatomical theatre in the Italian city of Padua, built in 1594, allowed for a crowd to gather and watch a dissection. Like other similar theatres that came after it, Padua's theatre featured circular tiered seating that ensured everyone in the audience could observe the dissection taking place in the centre without obstruction.

In the Netherlands, an anatomical theatre was built at Leiden University in 1597 and became an important aspect of the prominent institution. Originally intended as a centre for surgeons to perform dissections, demonstrations at Leiden's theatre came to serve as educational tools for students studying medicine. The dissections that took place in Leiden became significant events in the university's calendar and were attended by a wide range of people, from the students themselves to university officials, with all other classes suspended during the time of the anatomical demonstrations. Leiden's theatre was eventually closed in 1821 as anatomical theatres became less frequently used.



TOURIST ATTRACTION

Given the gory and intriguing nature of a human dissection, there was an appetite among the general public to attend anatomical demonstrations. Members of the public were allowed to attend dissections if they paid a fee, and were also permitted to visit the theatre at other times of the year when it functioned as a museum. The natural curiosities on display attracted inquisitive crowds.

SKELETONS

A number of skeletons, human and animal, were on display at Leiden's anatomical theatre. These exhibits were used for study and teaching purposes as well as functioning as objects of curiosity for those visiting the theatre's collections. Having both human and animal specimens allowed for comparisons between the two.

EDUCATION

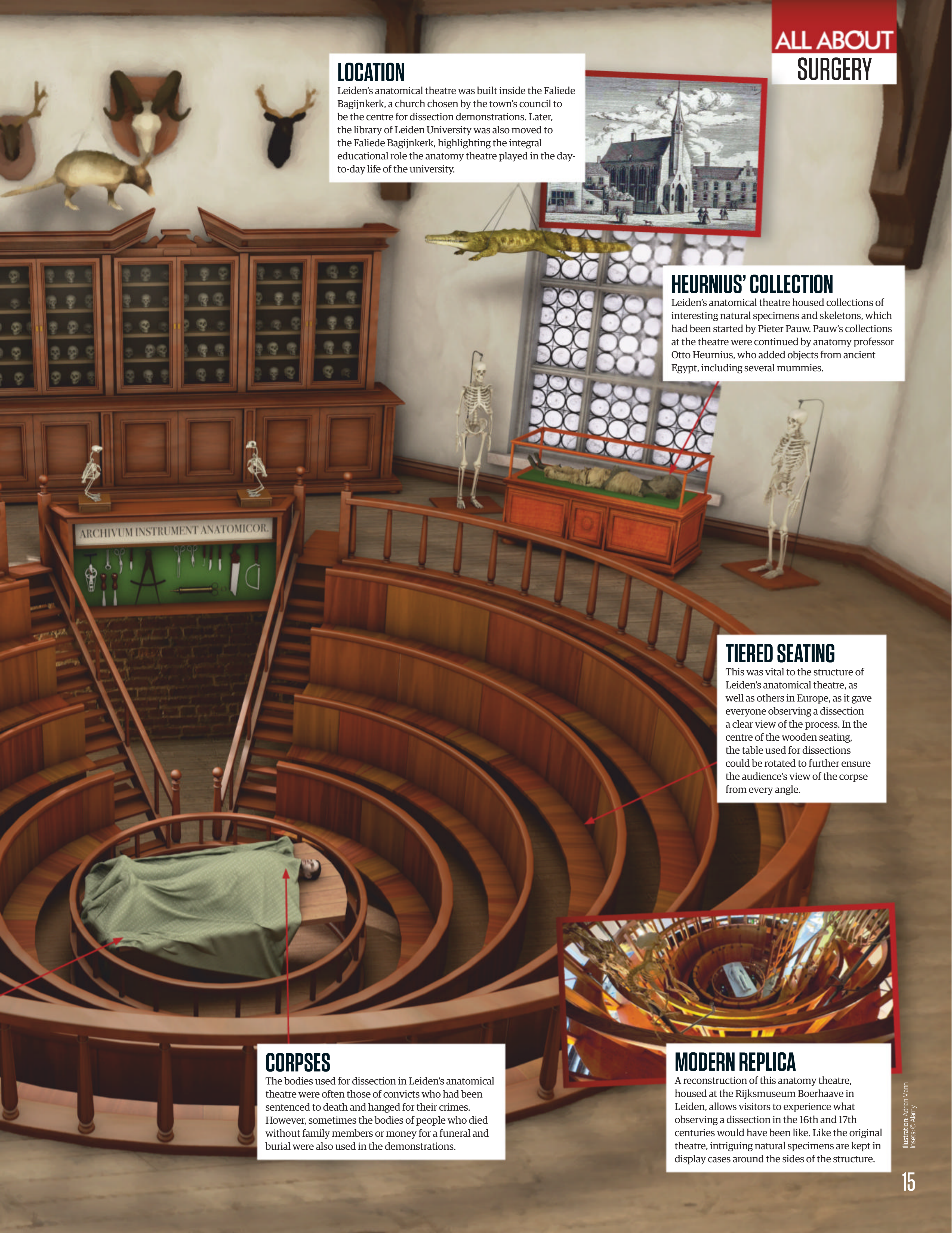
While dissections at the anatomical theatre were public spectacles that attracted paying audiences, the theatre's main purpose was as a serious educational institution. From 1651, some dissections were done privately for an audience exclusively made up of students, alongside continuing public demonstrations, in order to make the most of the venue as a centre for learning and training.

PIETER PAUW

A professor of anatomy at Leiden University, Pieter Pauw was responsible for the creation of the institution's anatomical theatre. He was at the forefront of advancements of anatomical study in Europe and had studied at anatomical centres like Padua and Paris.

DISSECTIONS

They were performed by the university's anatomy professor in the winter months to ensure the temperature remained cold enough to keep the body preserved. The entire dissection process took place over three days, during which the professor removed and examined the corpse's organs, tissue, muscles and bones.


ARCHIVUM INSTRUMENT ANATOMICOR.

LOCATION

Leiden's anatomical theatre was built inside the Faliede Bagijnkerk, a church chosen by the town's council to be the centre for dissection demonstrations. Later, the library of Leiden University was also moved to the Faliede Bagijnkerk, highlighting the integral educational role the anatomy theatre played in the day-to-day life of the university.

HEURNIUS' COLLECTION

Leiden's anatomical theatre housed collections of interesting natural specimens and skeletons, which had been started by Pieter Pauw. Pauw's collections at the theatre were continued by anatomy professor Otto Heurnius, who added objects from ancient Egypt, including several mummies.

TIERED SEATING

This was vital to the structure of Leiden's anatomical theatre, as well as others in Europe, as it gave everyone observing a dissection a clear view of the process. In the centre of the wooden seating, the table used for dissections could be rotated to further ensure the audience's view of the corpse from every angle.

CORPSES

The bodies used for dissection in Leiden's anatomical theatre were often those of convicts who had been sentenced to death and hanged for their crimes. However, sometimes the bodies of people who died without family members or money for a funeral and burial were also used in the demonstrations.

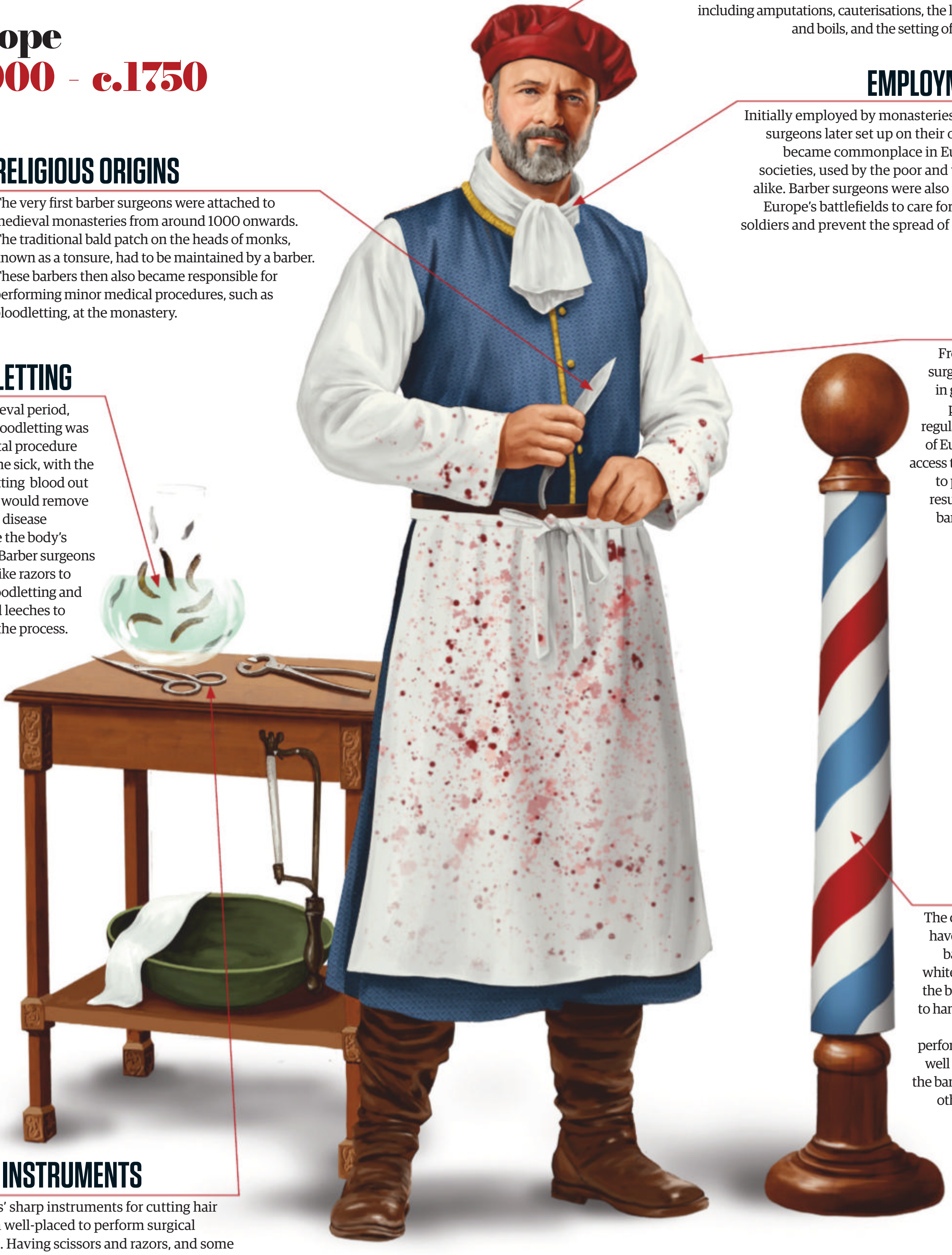
MODERN REPLICA

A reconstruction of this anatomy theatre, housed at the Rijksmuseum Boerhaave in Leiden, allows visitors to experience what observing a dissection in the 16th and 17th centuries would have been like. Like the original theatre, intriguing natural specimens are kept in display cases around the sides of the structure.

Illustration: Adrian Mann
Insets: © Alamy

BARBER SURGEON

Europe
c.1000 - c.1750



EVOLVING ROLE

While the first procedures carried out by barber surgeons were rudimentary ones like bloodletting and extracting teeth, later European barbers performed a wide range of operations including amputations, cauterisations, the lancing of cysts and boils, and the setting of broken bones.

EMPLOYMENT

Initially employed by monasteries, barber surgeons later set up on their own and became commonplace in European societies, used by the poor and wealthy alike. Barber surgeons were also used on Europe's battlefields to care for injured soldiers and prevent the spread of disease.

RELIGIOUS ORIGINS

The very first barber surgeons were attached to medieval monasteries from around 1000 onwards. The traditional bald patch on the heads of monks, known as a tonsure, had to be maintained by a barber. These barbers then also became responsible for performing minor medical procedures, such as bloodletting, at the monastery.

GUILDS

From the 14th century, barber surgeons began to be organised in guilds, which cemented the profession as legitimate and regulated. This meant that many of Europe's barber surgeons had access to training and were subject to professional standards. As a result, the services provided by barber surgeons became safer.

BLOODLETTING

In the medieval period, the act of bloodletting was seen as a vital procedure for curing the sick, with the idea that letting blood out of the body would remove infection or disease and balance the body's 'humours'. Barber surgeons used tools like razors to perform bloodletting and also applied leeches to assist with the process.

BARBER POLE

The classic barber poles of today have their origin with medieval barber surgeons. The red and white poles are representative of the bloodied bandages that used to hang outside an establishment and indicated that a barber performed surgical procedures as well as hair-cutting. In the wind, the bandages twisted around each other, creating the pattern still used on barber poles.

SHARP INSTRUMENTS

The barbers' sharp instruments for cutting hair made them well-placed to perform surgical procedures. Having scissors and razors, and some understanding of hygiene, enabled barbers in the early Middle Ages to conduct basic surgery.

Illustration: Kevin McGivern

Historical Treasures

CARBOLIC STEAM SPRAY

This device sprayed an acid solution to sterilise the air during an operation

Britain, c.1867

An early 19th century operating table was a dangerous place to be. Scientists of the time had not yet begun to understand the correlation between germs and infections and deaths following an operation were common, averaging around 30-50 percent.

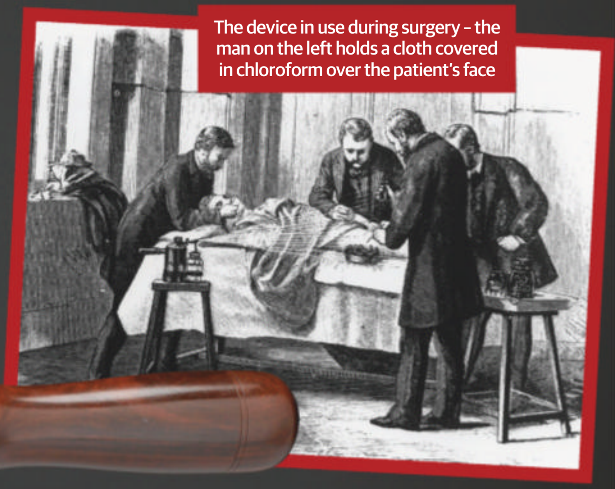
Joseph Lister was born in 1827 in Upton, England, and trained to be a surgeon, working first as a wound dresser. He became influenced by the work of French chemist Louis Pasteur and began to theorise whether it would be possible to sterilise the equipment in operating theatres and limit the risk of infection.

Lister discovered that carbolic acid was effective at destroying germs after he applied some to the wound of a 13-year-old boy. He began to implement a number of procedures, insisting surgeons submerge their gloves, instruments and dressings in a carbolic solution prior to an operation. He also speculated about the dangers posed by airborne microorganisms and began to explore the possibility of a device that would utilise a carbolic solution to sterilise the air of the operating theatre.

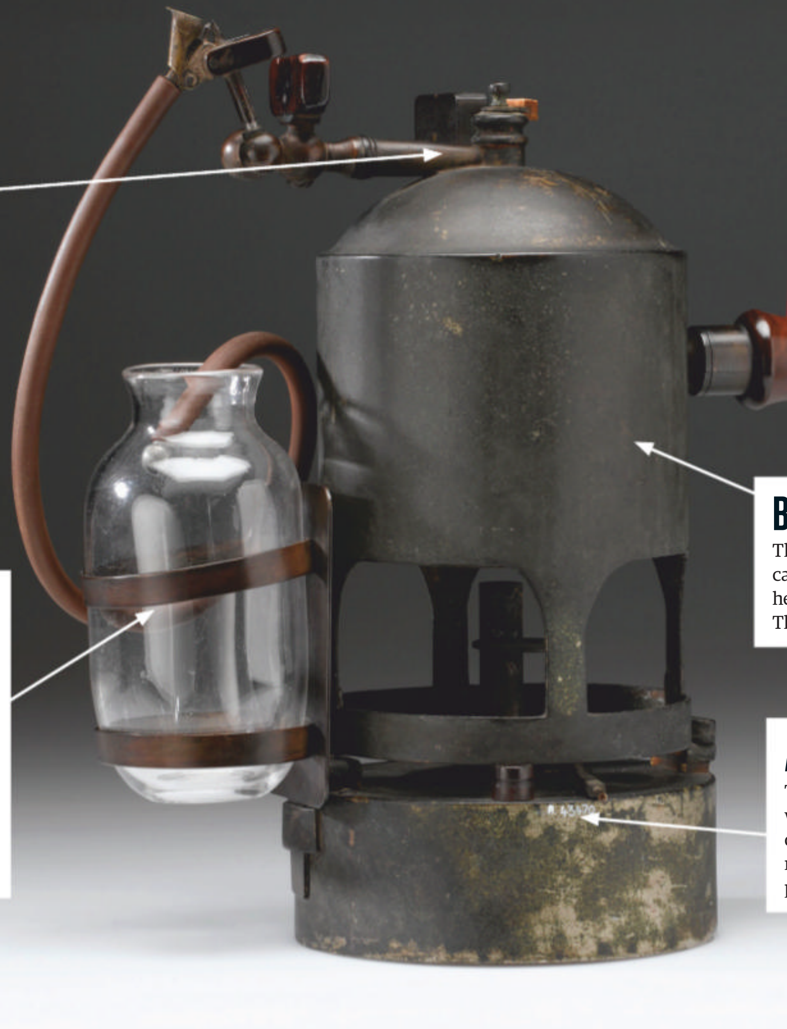
Lister invented a carbolic steam spray device that was used to disperse a solution of one-part carbolic acid to 100-parts water throughout the operating theatre. The resultant mist was yellowish in colour with a stifling smell. The heavy device was difficult to handle and as a result a number of different models were created, including one with a foot pump.

The steam spray was certainly effective, purportedly helping reduce the death rate from infections from 50 percent to 15 percent, but it was not without complications. The carbolic acid was highly corrosive and breathing in the spray damaged patients' lungs. The mixture itself could irritate the skin of the medical staff.

As such, by 1887 emphasis was instead placed on the sterilisation of instruments and clothing as opposed to any attempt to kill airborne bacteria. Addressing the audience at the 1890 Berlin Medical Conference, Lister reflected: "I feel ashamed that I should ever have recommended it for the purpose of destroying microbes in the air."



The device in use during surgery – the man on the left holds a cloth covered in chloroform over the patient's face



THE DONKEY ENGINE

The spray device was very heavy for the operator to hold, weighing around 4.5kg. As a result other variations were introduced, including one that could be mounted on a tripod, nicknamed The Donkey Engine.

STERILISING SOLUTION

The carbolic acid solution was housed within this glass bottle. When the water in the main tank was boiled and created steam, it would travel down the tube and combine with the acid. Lister claimed that the resultant spray would kill microbes in the air.

BOILING UP

The tank was filled with ordinary water and a lit candle was placed in the space beneath it. The candle heated the tank and boiled the water, creating steam. This would then be mixed with the acid.

A DANGEROUS DEVICE

There were numerous perils for the staff and patients when the spray was used. The carbolic mixture could cause irritation to the skin and medical staff who regularly used the device found themselves passing purple or black urine – a symptom of kidney damage.

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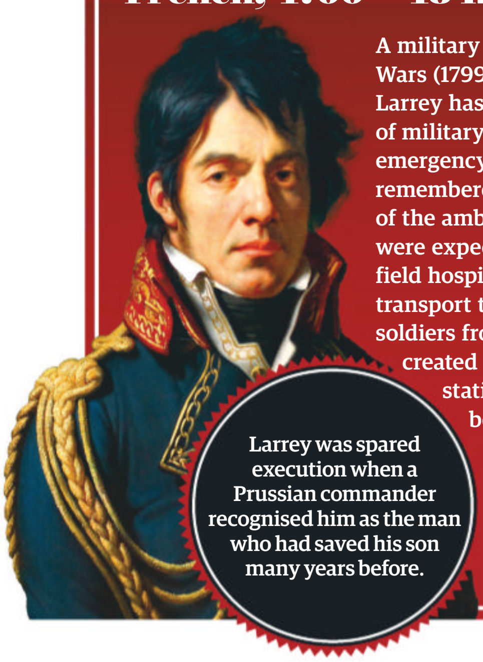
PIONEERS OF SURGERY

From Napoleon's favourite surgeon to the man who carried out the first heart transplant, meet these ten medical trailblazers

Dominique Jean Larrey

French, 1766 – 1842



Larrey was spared execution when a Prussian commander recognised him as the man who had saved his son many years before.

A military surgeon during the Napoleonic Wars (1799 - 1815), Dominique Jean Larrey has been hailed as 'the father of military medicine' and 'the father of emergency care'. Larrey is perhaps best remembered for inventing the concept of the ambulance. At the time troops were expected to find their own way to field hospitals, but he advocated the use transport to speedily remove wounded soldiers from the battlefield. He also created the modern triage system, stating that the wounded should be seen in accordance with the seriousness of their injuries as opposed to rank. Napoleon Bonaparte said Larrey was "the most virtuous man" he had known.

CHRISTIAAN BARNARD

SOUTH AFRICAN, 1922 – 2001

On 3 December 1967, Dr Christiaan Barnard made international headlines when he and his team of 20 surgeons completed the first successful heart transplant. Unfortunately, his patient Louis Washkansky died 18 days later from double pneumonia, but Barnard was undeterred and continued to conduct heart transplants, with increasing success. In the years since Barnard's death in 2001, around 5,000 heart transplants are carried out annually, with 90 percent of adults surviving at least one year after the operation and 80 percent surviving at least five years.

JENNIE SMILLIE ROBERTSON

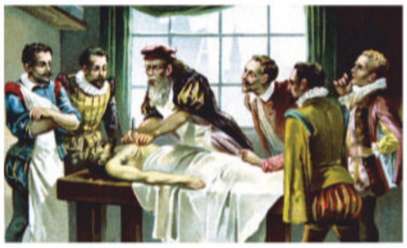
CANADIAN, 1878 – 1981

Jennie Smillie Robertson began to study medicine at age 25, using the money from her job as a teacher to pay for her tuition. After training to be a surgeon, her first operation was carried out on a domestic kitchen table. Robertson's career was primarily as a gynaecological surgeon, though she did also carry out work in the maternity wards and some abdominal surgeries. She often worked with the Women's College Hospital, a teaching hospital in Toronto founded in 1883.

AMBROISE PARÉ

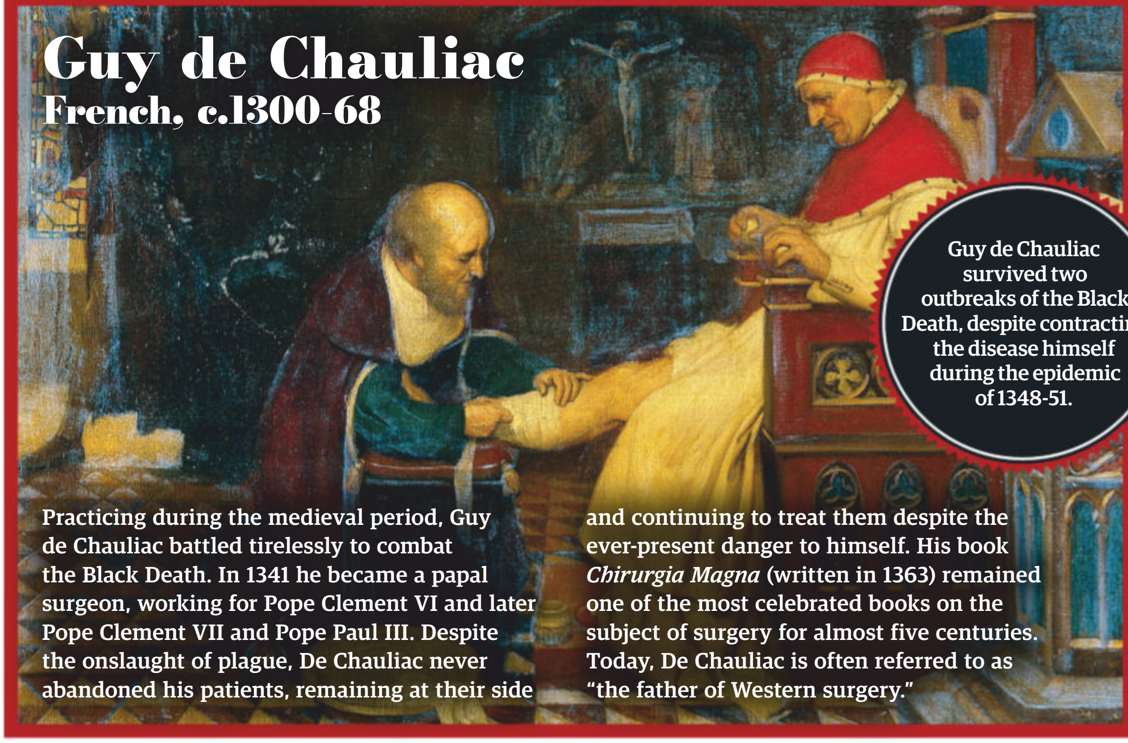
FRENCH, 1510-90

Paré is considered one of the foremost surgeons of the English Renaissance, and as royal barber surgeon he served Henry II, Frances II, Charles IX and Henry III. At the time, surgery was carried out fairly frequently, but Paré only operated when absolutely necessary. He was also quick to abandon the practice of castration as a treatment for a hernia - something other doctors of the time were keen to prescribe! Today he is seen as a surgical pioneer.



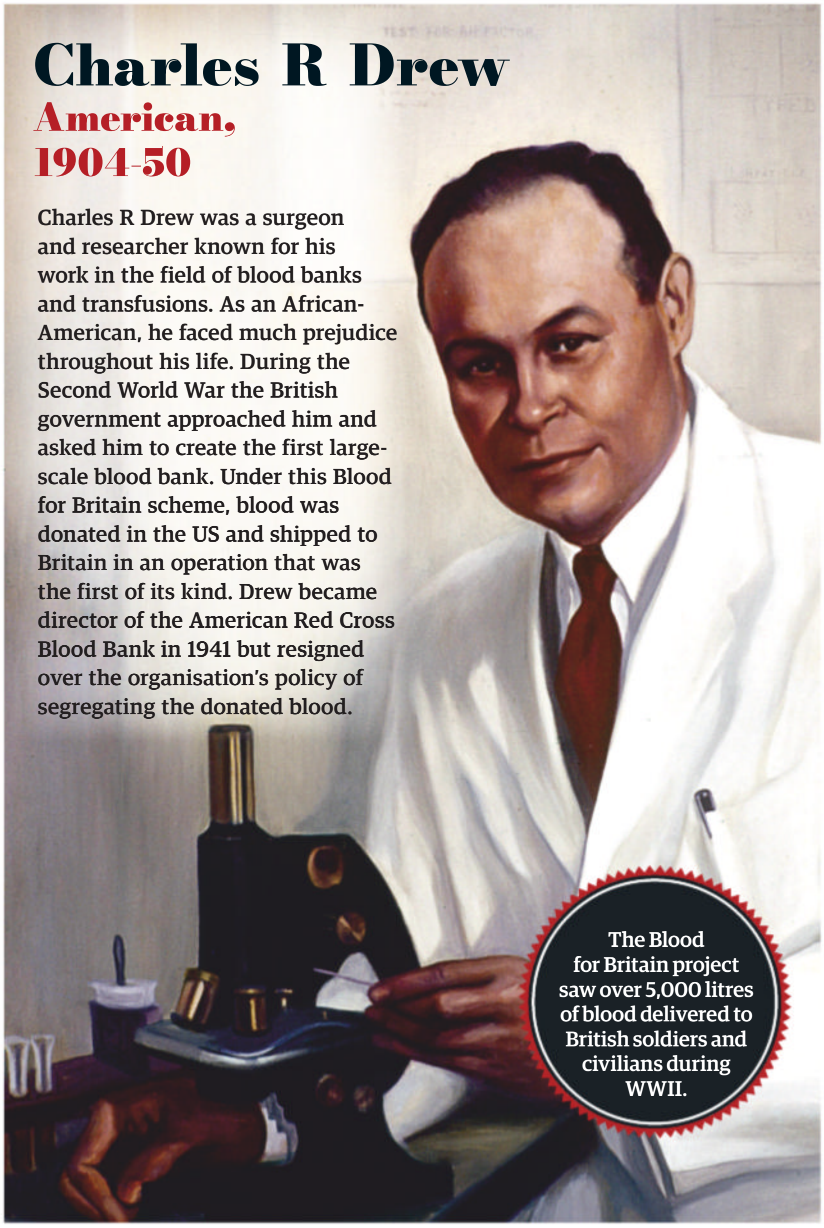
Guy de Chauliac

French, c.1300-68



Guy de Chauliac survived two outbreaks of the Black Death, despite contracting the disease himself during the epidemic of 1348-51.

Practicing during the medieval period, Guy de Chauliac battled tirelessly to combat the Black Death. In 1341 he became a papal surgeon, working for Pope Clement VI and later Pope Clement VII and Pope Paul III. Despite the onslaught of plague, De Chauliac never abandoned his patients, remaining at their side and continuing to treat them despite the ever-present danger to himself. His book *Chirurgia Magna* (written in 1363) remained one of the most celebrated books on the subject of surgery for almost five centuries. Today, De Chauliac is often referred to as "the father of Western surgery."



Charles R Drew

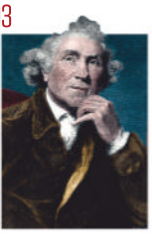
American, 1904-50

Charles R Drew was a surgeon and researcher known for his work in the field of blood banks and transfusions. As an African-American, he faced much prejudice throughout his life. During the Second World War the British government approached him and asked him to create the first large-scale blood bank. Under this Blood for Britain scheme, blood was donated in the US and shipped to Britain in an operation that was the first of its kind. Drew became director of the American Red Cross Blood Bank in 1941 but resigned over the organisation's policy of segregating the donated blood.

The Blood for Britain project saw over 5,000 litres of blood delivered to British soldiers and civilians during WWII.

JOHN HUNTER

SCOTTISH, 1728-93



John Hunter was trained as an anatomist by his brother William in the late 1740s. By the 1760s Hunter was a successful surgeon in his own right and began to amass an impressive collection of specimens. In 1776 he was named surgeon extraordinary to King George III and, according to the Hunterian Museum in London, by the 1780s he was "recognised as the leading surgeon of his time". Today the Hunterian Museum houses what is considered to be one of the best collections of anatomical specimens in the world.

Mary Edwards Walker

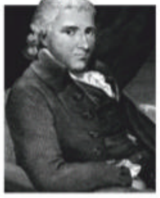
American, 1832 – 1919

As a pioneering female physician in a period when such things were still uncommon, Mary Edward Walker's application to join the Union Army as a surgeon during the American Civil War was rejected. Although not officially commissioned, she was eventually allowed to practise surgery on the frontlines. Upon being captured by Confederate troops after crossing enemy lines to treat wounded civilians, she continued to wear men's clothing, something she did throughout her life as she said she found it more practical. Throughout her life, Walker campaigned for equal rights for women and in 1871 published *Hit: Essays on Women's Rights*.

Despite being awarded the Medal of Honor for her valour during the US Civil War, Walker didn't receive a military pension due to her lack of commission.

BENJAMIN BELL

SCOTTISH, 1749 – 1806

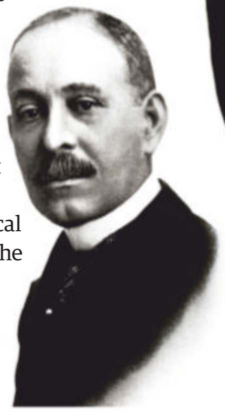


Benjamin Bell is credited with publishing the first comprehensive surgical textbook in the English language. He was particularly interested in ways to reduce pain for the patient, both during and after their operation, and his often-repeated phrase "save skin" described his method of ensuring wounds healed properly following amputations. As well as a renowned surgeon he was also a successful property developer. According to The Royal College of Surgeons in Edinburgh, by the time of his death he owned most of the suburb of Newington.

DANIEL HALE WILLIAMS

AMERICAN, 1856 – 1931

An African-American, Daniel Hale Williams was a renowned surgeon who in 1891 founded Provident Hospital, the first interracial hospital in the United States. Two years later he performed the first successful open-heart surgery. A year later he was appointed chief surgeon of Freedman's Hospital in New York but returned to Provident four years later. He also co-founded the National Medical Association, an alternative to the American Medical Association which forbade Black medical practitioners from joining.



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Q&A

THE FIRST PLASTIC SURGEON

Medical historian Dr Lindsey Fitzharris discusses an innovator of facial reconstruction, First World War surgeon Harold Gillies

What developments had been made in the field of plastic surgery by 1914?

Plastic surgery pre-dated the First World War. In fact, the term 'plastic surgery' was coined in 1798 by the French surgeon Pierre-Joseph Desault. At the time, the word referred to an object that could be shaped or sculpted; in this case, a person's skin or soft tissue. But efforts in earlier periods to rebuild, repair or alter the appearance of the face were typically confined to small areas such as the nose or the ears.

It wasn't until the American Civil War [1861-65] that attempts were made to reconstruct large sections of faces. Going under the knife for an experimental form of surgery, however, posed serious risks in terms of infection and could lead to further disfigurement if the surgery was done incorrectly. As a result, plastic surgery remained the exception rather than the rule.

However prevalent facial injuries were in the American Civil War, they were far more pervasive during the First World War. Men were maimed, burned and gassed. Some were even kicked in the face by horses. Before the war was over, 280,000 men from France, Germany and Britain alone would suffer some form of facial trauma. Because of this, the surgical inadequacies of past centuries would finally be addressed, paving the way for plastic surgery to enter a new era – one in which methods could be tried and tested on a massive scale.

Headshot: © Dr Lindsey Fitzharris

Dr Lindsey Fitzharris is a historian specialising in science and medicine. She is the author of *The Butchering Art: Joseph Lister's Quest to Transform the Grisly World of Victorian Medicine* and *The Facemaker*. In 2020 she hosted the Smithsonian Channel's *The Curious Life and Death of…* in which she investigated the deaths of noted historical figures.

Previously, what treatments were given to disfigured soldiers?

Disfigurement carried with it such a stigma in the past that French combatants who sustained such wounds during the Napoleonic Wars [1799 – 1815] were sometimes killed by their comrades, who believed they were sparing these injured men from further misery. The misguided belief that disfigurement was 'a fate worse than death' was still alive and well on the eve of the First World War.

Many soldiers who ended up in Harold Gillies' care learned that broken faces often led to broken hearts as fiancées broke off engagements. Sadly, this was not an uncommon experience. The nature of this type of injury could be very isolating. Disfigured soldiers were even forced to sit on blue benches if they left the hospital grounds so that the public knew not to look at them.

Who was Harold Gillies?

Harold Gillies put together an extraordinary interdisciplinary team, and taught himself and others how to rebuild the faces damaged by the world's first large-scale industrialised war. The medical challenges were immense. Whereas a prosthetic limb didn't necessarily have to resemble the arm or leg it was replacing, a face is a different matter. Any surgeon willing to take on the monumental task of reconstructing a soldier's face had to not only address loss of function, such as the ability to eat, but also consider aesthetics in order to reflect what society deemed acceptable.

How did Gillies become interested in plastic surgery?

Early in the war, Gillies met a dentist named Charles Valadier, who had retrofitted his Rolls-Royce with a dental chair and driven it to the front under a hail of bullets. While working with Valadier, Gillies recognised the desperate need for facial reconstruction. He worked hard to convince his superiors to allow him to open a speciality unit at the Cambridge Military Hospital in Aldershot.

Eventually, Gillies became so overwhelmed by the number of men requiring his help, he lobbied to open the Queen's Hospital in Sidcup – the very first of its kind dedicated entirely to plastic surgery. He found the work challenging and rewarding, and he developed strong bonds with many of his patients, some of whom even came to work for him after the war.

Why was his work important?

At the heart of my book [*The Facemaker*] is a story about what it means to be human, and what happens to us when we are robbed of something so essential to that identity. The process of rebuilding a soldier's face could be long and complicated. Sometimes a single patient needed as many as 15 operations, and these had to be spread out over an extended period. What Gillies was able to do for these men was not just mend their faces, but also their broken spirits.

Gillies met his new patients with the same quiet confidence with which he met all those who came under his care. He would often hand his patients an album of

> *"Gillies didn't just mend the soldiers' faces, but also their broken spirits"*

LEFT Harold Gillies, whose pioneering work helped many wounded troops, pictured in 1946

ABOVE During the First World War many soldiers received horrific facial injuries

THE FACEMAKER IS OUT NOW FROM PENGUIN BOOKS

THE INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER
THE FACEMAKER
LINDSEY FITZHARRIS

different nose types for their perusal. He wasn't interested in replicating their old faces, he wanted his patients to choose. This gave them back a sense of control over their lives and was an important part of the psychological healing process.

How was his work viewed at the time?

The transformative work carried out by Gillies was not immediately recognised. This oversight was eventually rectified in June of 1930, when he was finally knighted. Upon hearing this news, one of his former patients wrote to Gillies: "I don't suppose for one moment that you remember me, for I was one of many, but that matters little, for we remember you."

What, in your opinion, is Gillies' greatest legacy?

There was a lot of trial and error in those early days, and failure was his constant companion. But for those whose cases were successful, the work could be transformative. If Gillies is the backbone of this story, the disfigured soldiers are its beating heart. Many of his former patients wondered what their lives would have become had they not found their way into his skilled hands. He did not just restore their faces, he restored their dignity. The impact he had on their lives cannot be overstated. It's important that we do not put these men on the metaphorical blue bench in 2025. It's important that their faces be seen, and their stories be known.

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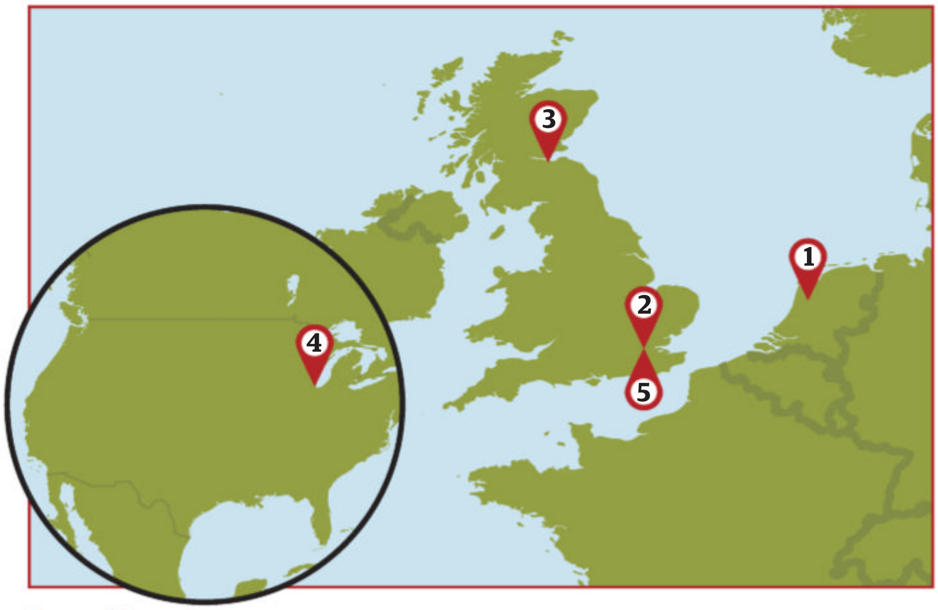
Places to Explore

SURGERY MUSEUMS

From Europe's oldest operating theatre to collections of anatomical preparations, visit these five medical museums



1 MUSEUM VROLIK

AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS

Father and son Gerard and Willem Vrolik were anatomists practising in mid-19th century Amsterdam. They built up a collection of anatomical preparations – preserved specimens that the pair used to teach the inner workings of the human body. The collection was subsequently purchased by a private group of wealthy locals, who bought it with the intention of donating it to Amsterdam Athenaeum Illustre, the precursor to Amsterdam University. Since then other anatomists have gone on to add to it, and the collection now numbers around 25,000 specimens.

The Vroliks also acquired a number of human skulls from across the globe, using these to help support their controversial theories on the supposed differing physical and mental qualities of various races, ideas which the museum now denounces as racist. These items are not available for public view and some have been returned to their place of origin. For example, in 2019 a number of human remains were returned to the Māori people.

The museum is open Monday to Friday, 11am-5pm. The average adult ticket costs €11, with concessions available.

The Vrolik Museum contains an impressive collection of anatomical preparations

2 HUNTERIAN MUSEUM

LONDON, UK

The museum has over 140,000 artefacts

The Hunterian Museum takes its name from 18th century anatomist and collector John Hunter. He collected an impressive 140,000 anatomical preparations, which were donated to the Royal College of Surgeons in London. Over the years, the collection of preparations expanded to become the largest of its kind in England.

The museum closed in 2017 to undergo a massive redevelopment and since reopening in 2023 it has expanded to focus much more on the history of surgery. Some of the highlights among the many items are dentures that once belonged to Winston Churchill, medical instruments previously owned by pioneering surgeon Joseph Lister, and the Evelyn Tables – the oldest anatomical preparations from Europe.

But there are also a number of more bizarre items among the museum's artefacts. These include a cockerel head with a human tooth surgically placed within its comb and a mummy foot, from the first ever mummy dissection, which was bizarrely discovered to have an onion attached to it.

Admission to the Hunterian Museum is free. It is open Tuesday to Saturday, 10am-5pm, with last recommended entry at 4pm.

The museum is one of the oldest in the UK

In 2022 a memorial to the NHS workers during the Covid pandemic was unveiled

3 SURGEONS' HALL
EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND

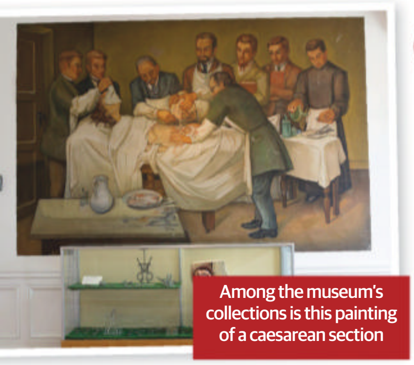
The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh was founded in 1505. Originally named the Barber Surgeons of Edinburgh, it is the oldest college of surgeons in the world and, according to its website, has a "prestigious network of 32,000 professionals in over 140 countries across the world".

Its Surgeons' Hall Museums is almost as old, dating back to 1699, when it began to seek out "natural and artificial curiosities". Now the collection traces the history of surgery and has a number of permanent collections as well as temporary exhibitions.

Among the highlights are the collections of Robert Knox, who was a key supporter of the museum during the 1820s and 1830s as well as one of Scotland's most famous surgeons. Today, however, Knox is largely remembered for his involvement in the crimes of the two bodysnatchers William Hare and William Burke.

Between 1827 and 1828, Burke and Hare murdered at least 16 people and sold the corpses of their victims to anatomist Knox. At the time, strict laws prohibited the use of corpses for research and Knox and his fellow surgeons were always on the lookout for fresh specimens. How aware of the crimes Knox was has remained a subject of debate, but he was forced to resign as curator of the museum and fled to London.

General admission is £9.50 for adults, with concessions and discounts available. The museum is open seven days a week, 10am-5pm, with the final admissions at 4.30pm.



Among the museum's collections is this painting of a caesarean section

4 INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM OF SURGICAL SCIENCE
CHICAGO, UNITED STATES

The museum of the International College of Surgeons is located on Lake Shore Drive in Chicago. Founded in 1935 by Dr Max Thorek, the same year he founded the college, the museum was built to house the various collections that would prove useful to students. Over the decades it has expanded and holds an impressive collection of 7,000 artefacts as well as manuscripts, paintings and other items relating the history of surgery.

Some of the highlights include a plaster cast made from the death mask of Napoleon Bonaparte, trephined skulls from Peru and a collection of 12 paintings by Gregorio Calvi di Bergolo, commissioned in 1953 to portray the history of surgery. Alongside the permanent collections are a number of temporary exhibits, which change regularly (more details of these can be found on the museum's website). The mansion itself is of interest to history lovers, being a replica of the Petit Trianon palace at Versailles, France.

Standard adult admission is $25, with concessions available. The museum is open Monday to Friday, 9.30am-5pm, and Saturday and Sunday, 10am-5pm.

5 THE OLD OPERATING THEATRE AND HERB GARRET
LONDON, UK

Quietly hidden away in the attic of St Thomas's Church in London is Europe's oldest surviving operating theatre. The chapel once served St Thomas's hospital and the theatre was built in 1822 to help serve the hospital. The theatre was constructed next to the Herb Garret, where the various herbs used to treat patients were stored.

In the 1860s the hospital moved to Lambeth, where it continues to operate. Rather than destroy the operating theatre, it was left as was. Bricks covered the entrance and it remained forgotten until 1956, when Ray Russell decided to investigate what lay hidden in the attic of the church. What he found was unique, even if the theatre was in need of repair. It was restored and opened as a museum to the public in 1962.

Today, the museum also hosts a number of events, including family craft activities, walking tours and a talk on the history of surgery. Anaesthesia as we understand it today began in 1846, so many of the operations carried out here would have caused considerable pain for the patients. As such, some of the details shared at The Old Operating Theatre can be on the grizzly and gruesome side, so those of a nervous disposition and the faint of heart should be wary.

General admission is £9 for adults, with concessions and discounts available. The museum is open Thursday to Sunday, 10.30am-5pm, with the final admissions at 4.15pm.

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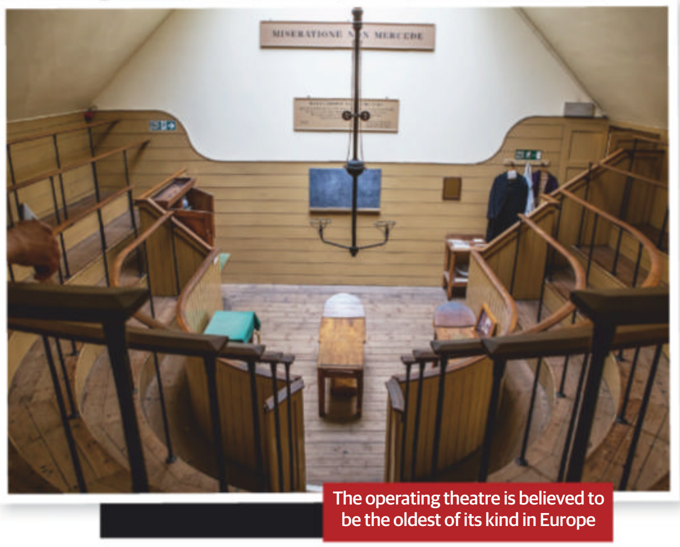

The operating theatre is believed to be the oldest of its kind in Europe

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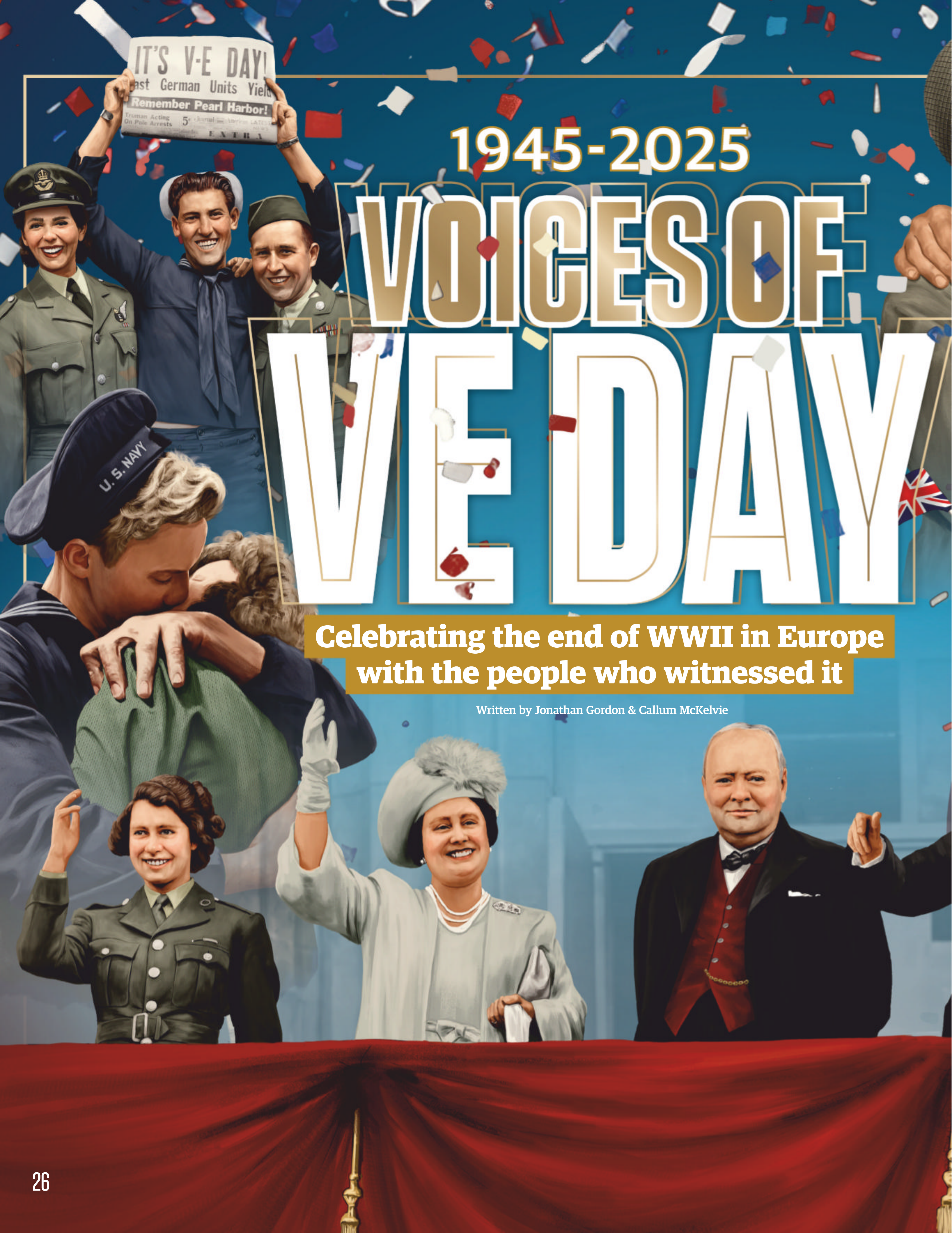

IT'S V-E DAY!
Last German Units Yield
Remember Pearl Harbor!
Truman Acting On Pole Arrests
EXTRA
U.S. NAVY

1945-2025

VOICES OF VE DAY

Celebrating the end of WWII in Europe with the people who witnessed it

Written by Jonathan Gordon & Callum McKelvie

Illustration by: Kevin McGivern

© Getty Images

"My dear friends, this is your hour. This is not [the] victory of a party or of any class. It's a victory of the great British nation as a whole"

Winston Churchill's words to the crowd in London on 8 May 1945 are a neat summation of the moment of unity that was being felt by very nearly everyone in Britain after he had officially announced the end of the war in Europe. On 7 May, in Reims, France, German General Alfred Jodl had signed the surrender of all German forces, ordering a ceasefire and bringing the fighting to an official end at 23:01 on 8 May, Central European Time.

Negotiations for the end of the war had been ongoing since Grand Admiral Karl Dönitz had succeeded Adolf Hitler as German head of state. The Führer's suicide on 30 April 1945, as Berlin was being seized street-by-street by the Soviet Red Army, accelerated expectations of the war's end. On 4 May the unconditional surrender of German forces in the Netherlands, northwest Germany and Denmark was made to British Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery at Lüneburg Heath. Three days later, at the Reims headquarters of Supreme Allied Commander General Dwight D Eisenhower, all German forces surrendered thanks to the signature of Jodl. A separate surrender agreement was made with the Soviet Union on 8 May, at the urging of Joseph Stalin, signed by German Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel in Berlin.

Expectation for an announcement of the end of hostilities in Europe had been building for at least a week ahead of 8 May. On 6 May, the *Sydney Morning Herald* was already discussing the anticipated news on its front page: "VE-Day news expected at any moment." A correspondent reported that: "Fear of Russian retribution has delayed the

"THE COUNTRY WAS TIRED OUT, EXHAUSTED, AND IT WAS A RELIEF THAT IT WAS NOW OVER"

“NO MORE SUFFERING AND HARDSHIP; PEACE HAD FINALLY DESCENDED UPON US”

German surrender to the Red Army.” In the morning edition of *The Manchester Guardian* on 7 May, it seems VE Day was still not certain: “The hour of Germany’s total surrender on all fronts is rapidly approaching. Simultaneous announcement of the news of the final capitulation will be made in London, Washington and Moscow. Mr Churchill will probably announce victory in Europe in a brief broadcast.”

Many had expected that the official announcement would land by 9pm on 7 May, but were left disappointed. In the BBC’s 2004 *WW2 People’s War*, John Ringham, who was 17 when the war ended, wrote: “Once D-Day had proved successful we all knew it was only a matter of time before it would be over. The country was tired out, exhausted and it was [a] relief that it was now over.”

The announcement that was made on 7 May revealed that the following day would be a national holiday and peace would officially be announced. Many didn’t wait to get the party started. “VE Day was officially declared on the 8th of May 1945 but the war in Europe was definitely over on that magic night before when London surged into life,” Joan Styan, who was 15 at the time, told *WW2 People’s War*. “London was aflame with human exhilaration. Bonfires blazed continuously over London and the sky was alight with the glow of victory. No more suffering and hardship; peace had finally descended upon us and everybody was at one with each other regardless of race, creed and status. Survival and freedom were all that mattered. We had waited so very long for this and in our wildest dreams had never envisaged a night like this.”

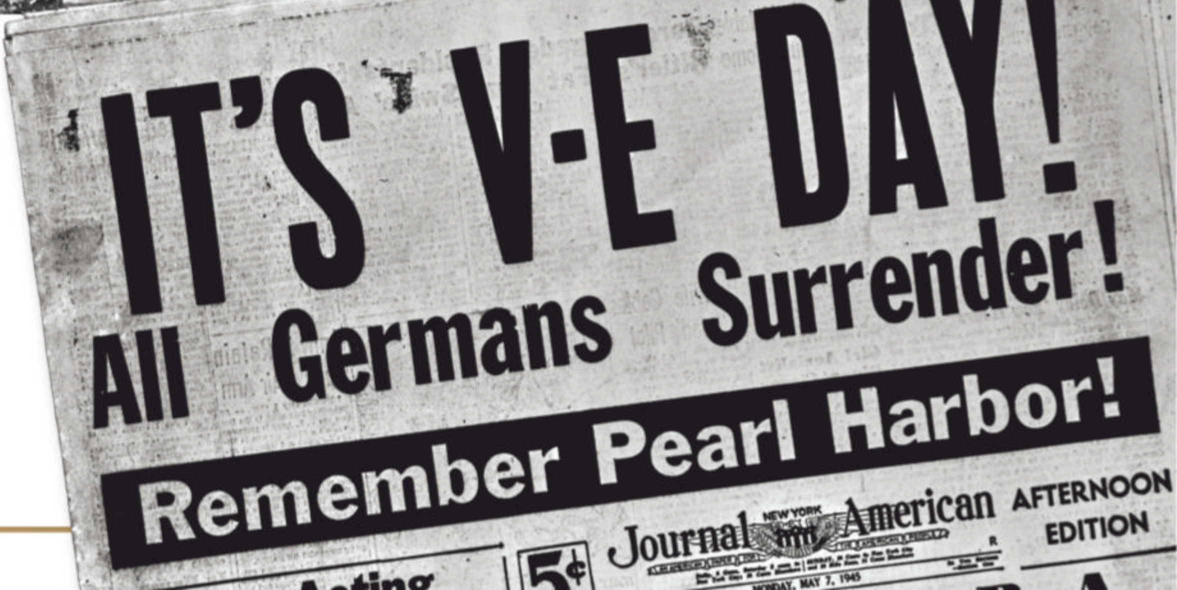
The Manchester Guardian’s Fleet Street staff in London reported at midnight: “Shouts and cries come up from the streets. The celebrations are gathering way. Someone arrives with stories of Piccadilly doings. Norwegian sailors climbing lamp-posts, American soldiers singing ‘Over there,’ Poles dancing, British commenting on the distance they are from Tipperary.” Ultimately they reflected on the change in mood and tone since the days of the Blitz: “It is the red glares that ring London, however, that hold the roof watchers. But they look up no more, only out and down. The long, long fight is over and won, and it is time to rest.”

Cities up and down the country were seeing similar scenes: “There was a big bonfire lit at the bottom of the road, someone had pushed a piano out and everyone was on Vale Road singing and dancing,” remembered Joyce Hughes, speaking to the Royal British Legion, of her memory of being ten years old in Liverpool at the time. “It was dark but everyone was out, 50 or more people in the street. We waited for mum and dad to come up and get us and they took us down to the bonfire. Everyone was happy, singing and hugging each other.”

The following morning, the wait for the synchronised announcement began. In the hours before Churchill’s scheduled 3pm address to the nation and then the House of Commons, people flocked to London. Sergeant Thomas Barry of the United States Air Force already had a pass to visit the capital and recalled the day in a letter, shared with *Find My Past*: “The

ABOVE Pat Burgess from Palmers Green celebrates the news on 7 May that the following day will be VE Day

LEFT Children marking VE Day in the remains of Battersea following the destruction of the Blitz



IT’S V-E DAY!

All Germans Surrender!

Remember Pearl Harbor!

5¢

Journal NEW YORK American R

AFTERNOON EDITION

MONDAY, MAY 7, 1945

WORD FROM THE FRONT

Geraint Jones discusses the reaction to peace among Allied troops

GERAINT JONES

Geraint served with the British Army during three tours of duty as an infantry soldier in Iraq and Afghanistan. He is now the author of numerous fiction and non-fiction books.

Prior to the German surrender on 8 May, was there a feeling among the troops that the war was very nearly over?

By the beginning of 1945 it was clear to most British soldiers that the war was coming to an end, but that did not mean that those on the frontline expected to survive it. After seeing so many of their friends and comrades killed, and the number of the original members of their units dwindling, experienced soldiers felt a sense of fatalism and that sooner or later 'you would get yours'. It was not uncommon for British soldiers to be wounded, patched up and sent back to the frontline, only to be wounded, patched up and sent back again, leading to a belief that the odds dictated death or serious wounds. There was also a widespread feeling that to be killed or wounded in the closing stages of the war was the worst luck of all.

On top of all this, there was an incredible amount of resentment that Germany refused to surrender, and soldiers were particularly bitter about the loss of comrades killed by enemy soldiers 'fighting for a lost cause'. This could, and did, lead to several instances of no quarter being given, or asked.

How was VE Day celebrated by those serving on the European front?

For many frontline soldiers it was a moment of reflection, rather than celebration. Hundreds of their friends and comrades had been killed or badly wounded since their units landed in Normandy, and some of the 'old soldiers' in the army had been fighting as far back as 1940, in the Battle of France, after which they had been evacuated from Dunkirk.

Having stared death in the face for so long, the end of hostilities in Europe left many of the army's seasoned soldiers with a feeling of numbness. That's not to say that there wasn't drinking and a huge sense of relief, but the general consensus from frontline soldiers seemed to be that the large parties which we associate with VE Day were enjoyed more by those who had not been directly involved in the fighting.

Then, of course, there was the knowledge that Japan had yet to be defeated, and that Victory in Europe did not guarantee survival for those who had made it through to the defeat of Nazi Germany. That summer of 1945, the BLA (British Liberation Army), which had fought its way from the beaches of Normandy into the heartland of Germany, was rechristened by wry soldiers in the army's ranks to reflect their likely destination: Burma Looms Ahead.

How soon did demobilisation begin and Allied troops start to return home?

Demobilisation began six weeks after the surrender of Japan, but an end to the Second World War did not mean that all of the service personnel who had been mobilised to fight it were immediately brought home, if they ever came home at all. Hundreds of service personnel conscripted to fight the Axis Powers lost life and limb in post-war conflicts, such as the Palestine Emergency, and it was a matter of years before all conscripts were 'demobbed'.

I do hope that, when we remember VE Day, we give a great deal of attention to the troops who were never able to return to their families, including those who were killed within months, weeks and even days of peace. Despite a widespread belief that 'the war was as good as won' by the beginning of 1945, thousands of British soldiers were killed in the army's final campaign against Nazi Germany, many of them in actions that have remained largely unknown. Some of these soldiers were 17- and 18-year-old replacements who were killed in their first battle. Others had been in action since before Dunkirk, some had landed with the first waves on D-Day, and a few had seized Pegasus Bridge. The family of Captain Ian Liddell, VC, who was killed a few weeks before VE Day, described these individual deaths and tragedies as pieces in "the mosaic of victory".

VICTORY
VOICES OF VICTORY
Powerful eye-witness accounts of the battle to take Germany, February 1945 to VE Day
GERAINT JONES

Two soldiers read the news of VE day in Verdun, France

VOICES OF VICTORY: POWERFUL EYE-WITNESS ACCOUNTS OF THE BATTLE TO TAKE GERMANY, FEBRUARY 1945 TO VE DAY by Geraint Jones is out now from Macmillan, priced £22

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A ROYAL VE DAY

How the king and company spent Victory Day

11AM

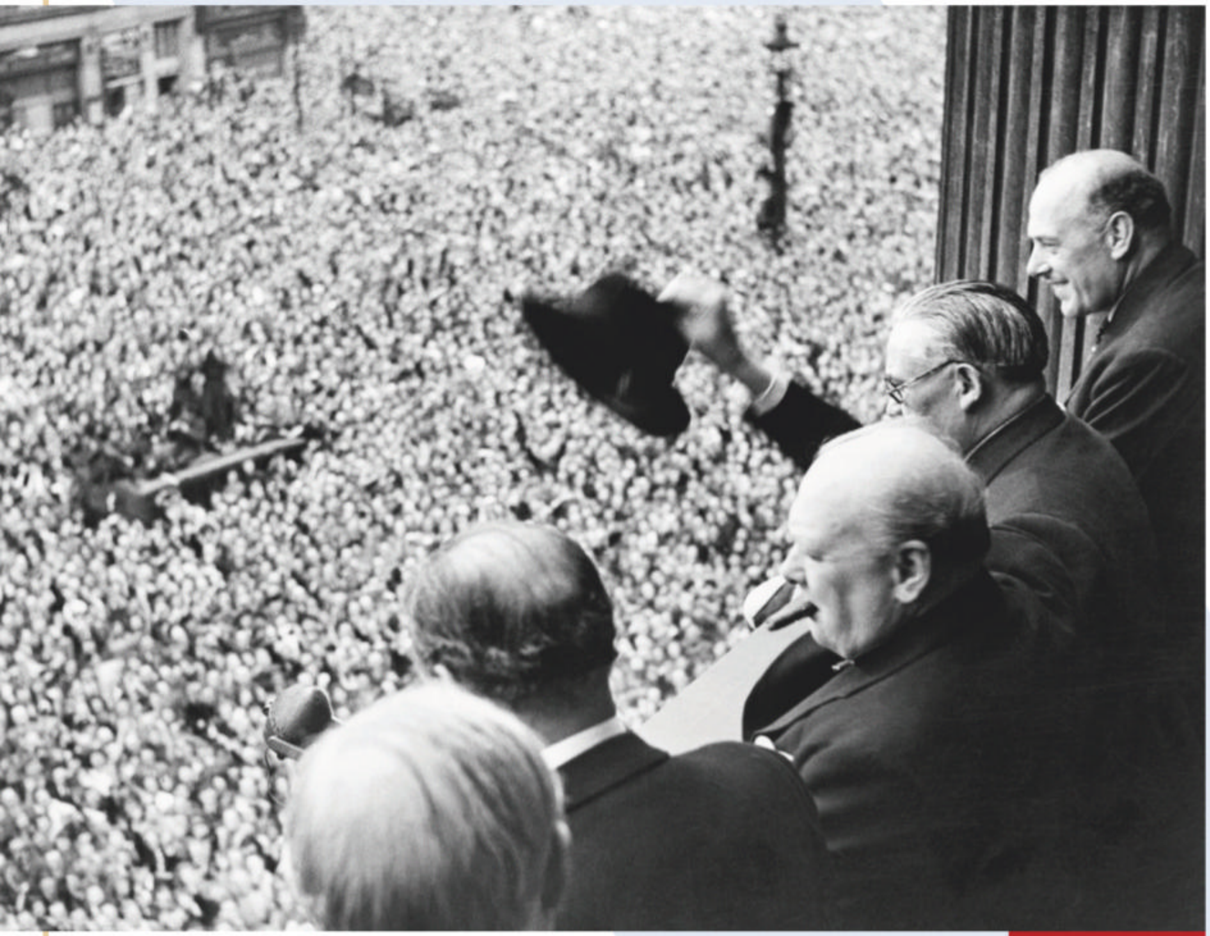
The day at Buckingham Palace begins with the Changing of the Guard. Triumphant crowds form outside the gates. An estimated 100,000 people will gather there throughout the day.

1PM

The king has a celebratory luncheon with Prime Minister Winston Churchill, finishing at around 2.40pm. Churchill returns to Downing Street just in time to give his speech to the nation at 3pm.

3:15PM

King George VI along with Princesses Elizabeth, Anne and Margaret wave to crowds from the balcony at Buckingham Palace for the first, but certainly not the last, time that day.



ABOVE Winston Churchill addresses the crowds from the Ministry of Health following the announcement of peace

bugle call 'ceasefire' was sounded, then the Speaker of the House of Commons introduced Mr Churchill, who gave a very fine talk, sprinkled here and there with great cheering from the crowd standing in the square outside the House. He ended it with the words 'God save the King!' Then we snapped to attention as the British national anthem was played, and the crowd joined in the singing with hearts that were joyful and thankful after nearly five-and-a-half years of war. What a crowd there was – they filled the square overflowing, stretched past Parliament over Westminster Bridge to the south, for blocks on Whitehall to the east and west, and filled Birdcage Walk and Victoria to the north."

Those not already in the centre of the capital started making their way there. "We listened to Mr Churchill's victory speech on the radio first, before making tracks for London and Piccadilly," recalled Joyce Smith, VHF direction finding operator for the Women's Auxiliary Air Force, writing for the RAF Association in 1995. "Every Tube station was disgorging masses of people and all inward buses were full. The tide of people flooding into the West End reached its peak during the afternoon, and Piccadilly was packed with a steady flow of celebrators releasing their pent-up spirits in mad abandon, exploding with joviality." She notes that those in uniform got special attention: "Everyone in the services got a handshake, embrace or a pat on the back, and we girls in uniform were greeted with hugs and kisses. Processions formed out of nowhere, people waving flags or whirling football rattles – anything that made a noise – all marching in step with linked arms or doing the 'Lambeth Walk'."

> "EVERYONE IN THE SERVICES GOT A HANDSHAKE, EMBRACE OR A PAT ON THE BACK"

Ray Smith was docking with the HMS Middleton when the announcement was made. "We ended up going to London and joining in the celebrations right in the middle of Trafalgar Square and ended up partying all day long, meeting some lovely Wrens [Women's Royal Naval Service] along the way who we ended up sleeping in a shop doorway with as there were no hotels available – but we didn't care, it had been the best day ever!" he told the Royal British Legion.

Also in Trafalgar Square were Joyce Digney and Cynthia Covello, photographed standing in the fountain. They had served in the Women's Land Army, and Digney wrote to Covello's family in 2006 recounting their experience, her letter shared with the Imperial War Museums: "We walked all over London, and unless you were there, you could not believe the euphoria; hugs, kisses, smiles and laughter. It was like a gigantic family coming together."

Another focal point for the crowds was Buckingham Palace, with thousands of people gathering expectantly to see King George VI, Queen Elizabeth and Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret. "We were at the front of Buckingham Palace, with the masses of crowds behind us – everyone wanted to be there," remembered Joan Blair, Auxiliary Territorial Service clerk stationed at Feltham, West London, speaking in 2021

5PM

Churchill and members of the War Cabinet arrive for a meeting. At 5.30, the king goes on to the balcony for a third time that day, this time accompanied by the prime minister.

9PM

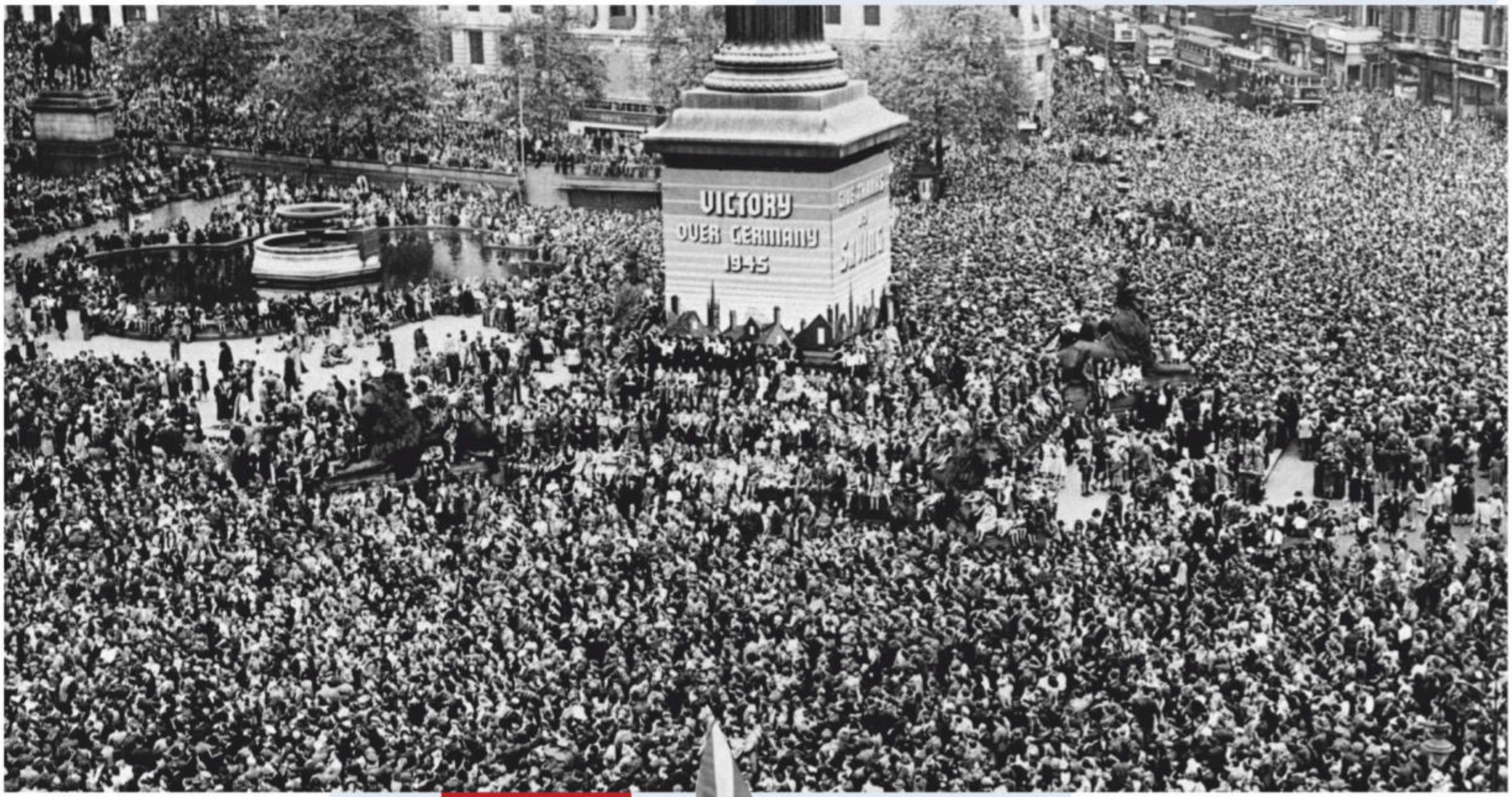
The king gives a radio address from the palace, thanking the British people for their fortitude. However, he reminds them that the war in the Pacific continues to rage.

10:45PM

In an unprecedented move, the king gives permission for Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret (then 19 and 14) to leave the household incognito, accompanied by royal staff. They join the celebrations and later do the conga outside the Ritz.

0:30AM

The king makes his fifth and final appearance on the balcony of Buckingham Palace for the crowds. The VE Day celebrations continue long into the morning.



to the SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity. "Somebody important had got us to the front position, because we were connected to headquarters in London. We saw the royals come out on the balcony, and the young princess... Everyone screamed and clapped. We felt honoured to be where we were. I wish I'd had a camera."

What she likely didn't know was that the princesses were soon in the crowd with her. Famously, the young royals were given permission to leave the palace and enjoy the celebrations themselves. "My sister and I realised that we couldn't see what the crowds were enjoying so we asked my parents if we could go out and see for ourselves," Elizabeth II told the BBC in 1985. "We cheered the king and queen on the balcony and then walked miles through the street. I remember lines of unknown people linking

ABOVE Thousands of people gather in Trafalgar Square to mark VE Day

RIGHT Piccadilly Circus in London was another focal point for the celebrations

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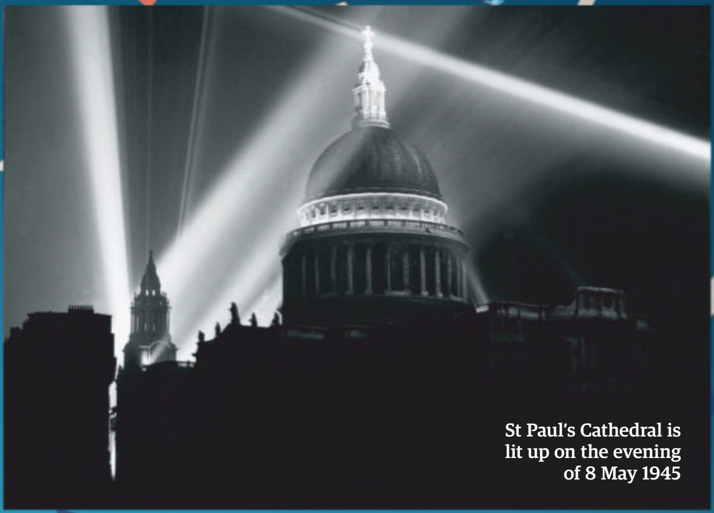
THE ROAD AHEAD

Lucy Noakes discusses VE Day on the homefront

A VE day party held on Dunstan Street in Netherfield, Nottingham



St Paul's Cathedral is lit up on the evening of 8 May 1945

What was the feeling in Britain in the run-up to VE Day? Was there an awareness that the war was coming to an end?

Reading through the Mass Observation diaries [a social observation project to record the thoughts and feelings of the British population], there was definitely an awareness that the war in Europe was coming to an end. But there was also increasing frustration when they kept expecting it to be announced, especially after the death of Hitler. One of the things I thought was interesting was people's scepticism. 8 May 1945 was a Tuesday. The previous week, people were expecting it to be announced all week. They began to get cross, thinking it was going to be announced on Friday and they wouldn't get any time off as any celebration would be held over the weekend. So there was a mixture of frustration, excitement and distrust as well.

What was the experience of VE Day like for the general British population?

It depended on several things. Firstly, geography. If you were able to get to a big city, there would likely be some celebration. In Newcastle the mayor gave a speech, and people gathered in the main square. Hull and other places had illuminations. There had been the blackout and then the grey out, so people were really struck by just how beautiful the coloured lights were. There was a general feeling of a holiday. But one of the saddest diaries I read in the Mass Observation Collection was from a farmer's wife in mid-Wales. She's miserable. She states that they didn't do anything, it rained all day, nothing was happening in her local town and even if it had been they didn't have any petrol to get there. The other thing that affected how people experienced VE Day was personal circumstances. If they had somebody who was either missing or a prisoner of war, you were far less likely to be celebrating. But then there were also a lot of people who didn't do anything because they were aware that people in their street had lost their sons, or someone's husband was in a prisoner of war camp, etc.

© Kate Clayton, University of Essex

LUCY NOAKES

Lucy is professor of History at the University of Essex. Her research focuses on the experiences of ordinary people during the Second World War. Since 2024 she has served as president of the Royal Historical Society.

Was there any bitterness felt on the homefront knowing that some service personnel were about to be sent to the Pacific?

No, not that I've seen. But there was a lot of anxiety when people's loved ones couldn't be located, particularly prisoners of war. There's one really sad story of a nurse from Preston. Everyone was celebrating, but she hadn't heard from her fiancé for about two years. It turns out he was in a prison camp in the east of Germany and had been sent on one of the death marches. They think he was in a group that tried to escape behind Russian lines and he was presumably killed during the attempt.

How did people feel when life didn't immediately return to normal?

People were really fed up. Particularly with rationing, which didn't just continue after the war – it got worse. On [21 July 1946] bread was rationed for the first time, potatoes were rationed [in 1946 also]. Between 1947-1948 you had a really cold winter but coal was still rationed [until 1958]. There is a sense of 'we won the war, so where's the reward?' But there were also a lot of people who still had faith in the Labour government to change things. Even when the Conservatives were re-elected in 1950 that post-war moment of radical social change didn't end. They didn't abolish the Welfare State, they didn't abolish the National Health Service. There was a real consensus among both major parties that, what was called in the mid-1940s the 'New Jerusalem', that Britain wanted to build, that it was worthwhile.

THE PEOPLE'S VICTORY
VE DAY THROUGH THE EYES OF THOSE WHO WERE THERE
Lucy Noakes

THE PEOPLE'S VICTORY:* *VE DAY THROUGH THE EYES OF THOSE WHO WERE THERE by Lucy Noakes is released on 1 May 2025 by Atlantic Books, priced £22

All images: © Alamy, © Getty Images

arms and walking down Whitehall, all of us just swept along on a tide of happiness and relief."

Of course, celebrations weren't just being held in London. Up and down Britain, people were heading out into the streets and rejoicing the news of peace in Europe. "The entire city went a little mad," reflected Tommy Mac, speaking to *WW2 People's War* in 2003 about his experience in Glasgow, aged 14 at the time. He grabbed the hand of the nearest young woman and headed off into town. "She was to be my companion for the rest of the day. We made our way hand in hand from where we lived in the Cowcaddens part of the city in order to find the main celebration in George Square. Every street we went through was holding some party or another."

Janet Harvey, who worked at Clyde Shipyards during the war, told the BBC in 2020: "I remember the feeling of waking up and you knew that everything was going to be alright. We were in George Square [Glasgow] and we were all dancing and singing and cuddling each other, it was like the end of the world."

A Bede's Senior School project in 2020 gathered responses for people's memories of VE Day, including many from family members who had only been children themselves when peace was announced. "I was 11 years old when the war ended, and it just so happened that date coincided with my 11th birthday," Barbara Sheppard, who celebrated VE Day on Netherwood Street, Kilburn, recalled for the school. "My mother told me that it would be the biggest celebration I would ever have, and she was right. I remember the big parties in the street to this day - everyone came out with huge trestle tables, homemade food, wearing red, white and blue - and there was so much laughter. I was excited after years of being stuck indoors, and I was finally happy there was an occasion to wear pretty clothes that I had saved up, and wear plaits with red ribbons."

This was a moment that held a lot of promise, but there were still challenges to overcome, not the least of which on VE Day was food rationing, which had been introduced by the British government in January 1940. "The party food was, by present-day standards, fairly basic," Peter Olliff, who was six when the war ended, told Bede's Senior School. "We had fish paste, Spam and cheese sandwiches. These were followed by a selection of homemade cakes which did not have much flavour. Flour, yeast, butter and most of today's staples were not available. However, people were very inventive finding substitutes for these items."

Cake and ice cream weren't available for the children of Britain, and for the adults alcohol was still pretty tough to come by in some areas as well. "The incredible release from fear and pain had at last encompassed us and can only be described fully by those who experienced it," recalled Joan Styan, speaking to *WW2 People's War* in 2004. "There was just sheer unadulterated jubilation with no order whatsoever, despite the conspicuous absence of many alcoholic drinks. The masses were more intoxicated with victory than with alcohol!"

Meanwhile, word began to spread, perhaps a little more slowly, to those still out on the frontlines and stationed in Allied bases. Les Collins was wireless operator for the 1st Assault Brigade ►

ABOVE Those fortunate enough to be released from duty flocked to city centres

BELOW-LEFT American soldiers stationed in London dance with personnel from the Office of War Information

BELOW-RIGHT As VE Day began, impromptu processions gathered to march to celebrations

> "ALL OF US JUST SWEPT ALONG ON A TIDE OF HAPPINESS AND RELIEF"

ABOVE ATS women and US soldiers celebrate VE Day in Trafalgar Square

> “THE MASSES WERE MORE INTOXICATED WITH VICTORY THAN WITH ALCOHOL!”

Royal Engineers and was the one to decode the message that confirmed the surrender of Germany. Speaking to the SSAFA in 2021, he recalled: “We were still in operations and it came over my radio from a lieutenant that they had surrendered. I had to decode the message. I had my earphones on, and it came through in Slidex letters [a paper-based encryption system]. ‘Surrender,’ I was told, ‘Germany has surrendered.’ And the first thing we saw after was the German Army marching up the autobahn, 20-deep by 20-wide, whole columns. I didn’t know there were so many. Seeing them march down and past us, with British troops around them… it was fantastic. Don’t forget, we were overjoyed that they had surrendered. We had been living rough for 12 months. We just felt freedom at last!”

But while spirits were high in most quarters, for many the mood remained sombre. The end of the war in Europe also meant the time had come for reflection and to think about the future. Fighting was still raging in the Pacific and there was a shattered continent to rebuild after the ravages of conflict. “We may allow ourselves a brief period of rejoicing; but let us not forget for a moment the toil and efforts that lie ahead,” Churchill had urged in his radio address at 3pm. “Japan, with all her treachery and greed, remains unsubdued. The injury she has inflicted on Great Britain, the United States and other countries, and her detestable cruelties, call for justice and retribution. We must now devote all our strength and resources to the completion of our task, both at home and abroad. Advance, Britannia! Long live the cause of freedom! God save the King!”

A man and his daughter mark VE Day in Paris

THE VE DAY RIOTS

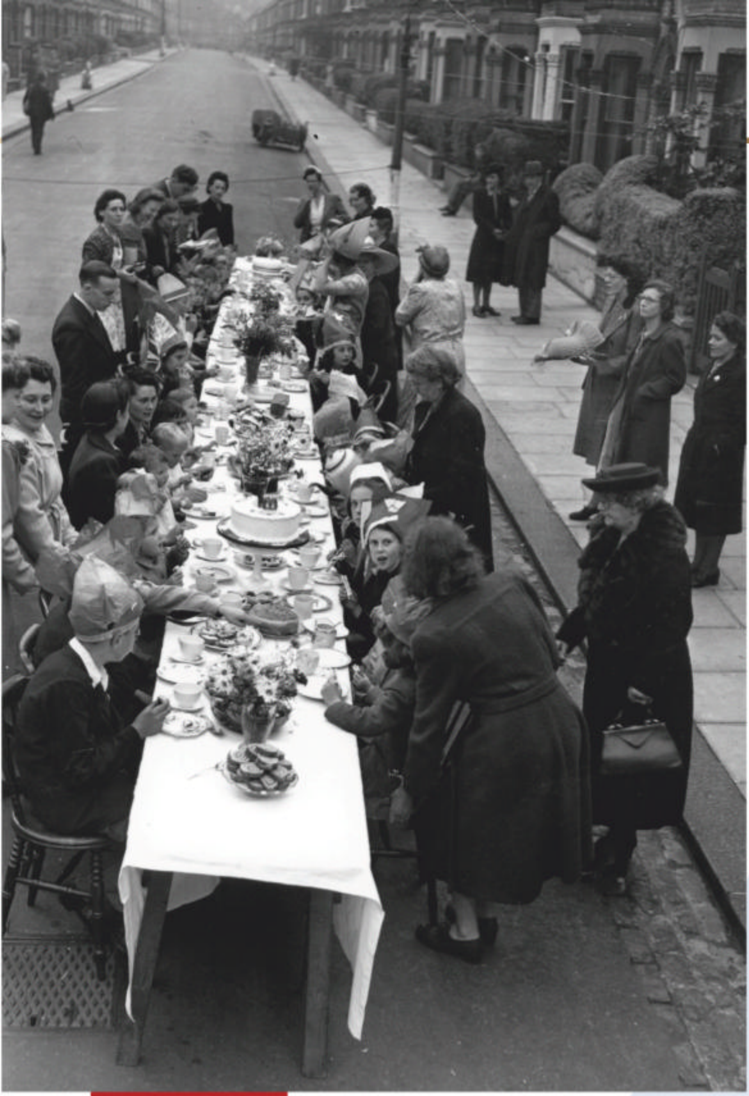
In Halifax, Canada, festivities descended into chaos

Across the world, VE Day was marked with celebrations and festivities. However, in the town of Halifax in Nova Scotia, Canada, the situation got out of control. The town was woefully underprepared for the influx of servicemen, with few facilities to cater for them.

As celebrations began a mob formed in the streets. To begin with the rioters targeted liquor stores, stealing 61,500 litres of liquor and 33,000 litres of beer. Then the drunken mob attacked any shops they could find, and purportedly set fire to tram cars. The local police found themselves powerless against the thousands of rioters. Eventually, after a night of total chaos, the situation dissipated.

In total 564 businesses were damaged, 207 shops were looted and over 2,600 windows were smashed.

Distressingly there were also fatalities, with two navy personnel and a police officer killed in the night of mayhem.



ABOVE Neighbours in Clapham Common, London, throw a street party

Edith 'Peggy' Florence Cochrane worked in the Cabinet War Office and wrote to her future husband Lance Corporal Ronald Gibson summarising some of the mixed feelings of the day. "Well at last VE Day has come and gone, and as far as I'm concerned, it was a very great day, and one I'll never forget," she wrote in her letter, which was donated to the Imperial War Museums. "But during all the celebrations here in London, I couldn't help wondering all the time how you and all the other men who made it possible were spending the day."

Ron Goldstein, stationed in Italy as the war ended, recorded in his diary how he felt about VE Day: "I remember quite clearly that my emotions at the time were mixed," he wrote in an entry shared with *WW2 People's War*. "On the one hand it was good to feel that perhaps some of my loved ones back home were taking part in the scenes that were now taking place. On the other hand I, and in hindsight, I'm sure most of my comrades, felt somehow cheated that we, who had 'risked life and limb' and had been away from home for so many years, were not there in England to share in the triumph."

There were also plenty of people who had lost loved ones during the war, whether in battle, during the Blitz or as victims of the Holocaust. "I knew I didn't have a father anymore, but I was very happy, hoping my mother would be able to come to England, because there was no way I was going to leave," Henny Franks told the SSAFA in 2021. She had been one of the Jewish children rescued from Germany before the war in the Kindertransport programme and went on to volunteer in the Auxiliary Territorial Service during the conflict. "After the war the army wanted to send me to Germany to help. It was a voluntary posting and I refused. I said: 'No way will I go back, I'm glad I'm out of there, that's a miracle anyway.' If they had ordered me to go, I would have gone. I couldn't refuse orders. But they never did."

Ultimately, for one day at least, people were able to reflect. Whether those reflections brought joy or sadness, dwelt on victory or loss, or were a mixture of all of these feelings, it didn't really matter. The release was what was important, like exhaling after a long-held breath. And tomorrow could be something new.

"I say that in the long years to come not only will the people of this island but of the world, wherever the bird of freedom chirps in human hearts, look back to what we've done and they will say: 'Do not despair, do not yield to violence and tyranny, march straightforward and die if need be-unconquered,'" Churchill told the crowds gathering in London. "Now we have emerged from one deadly struggle, a terrible foe has been cast on the ground and awaits our judgment and our mercy."

RIGHT The ongoing hardship of rationing failed to dampen spirits

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VICTORY

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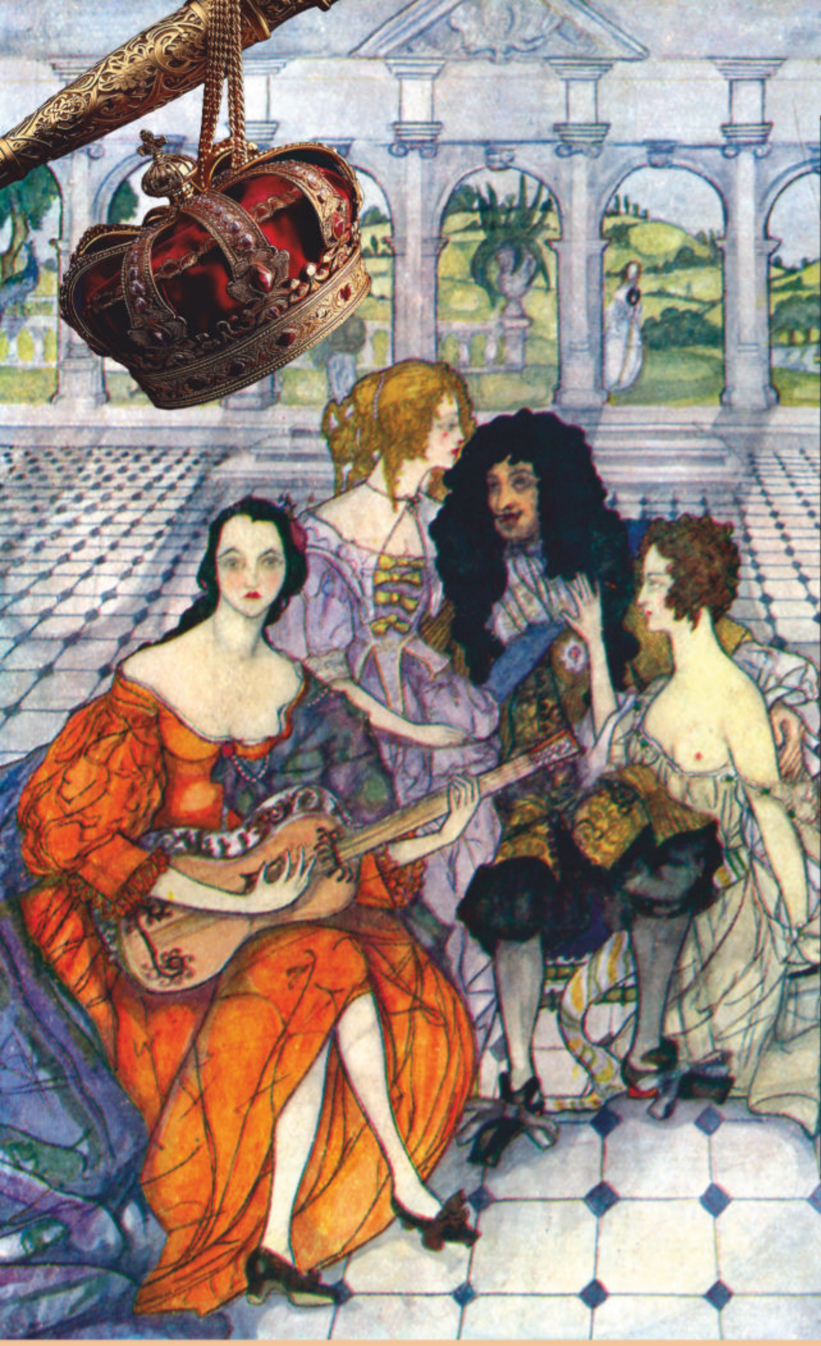
British Royal BASTARDS

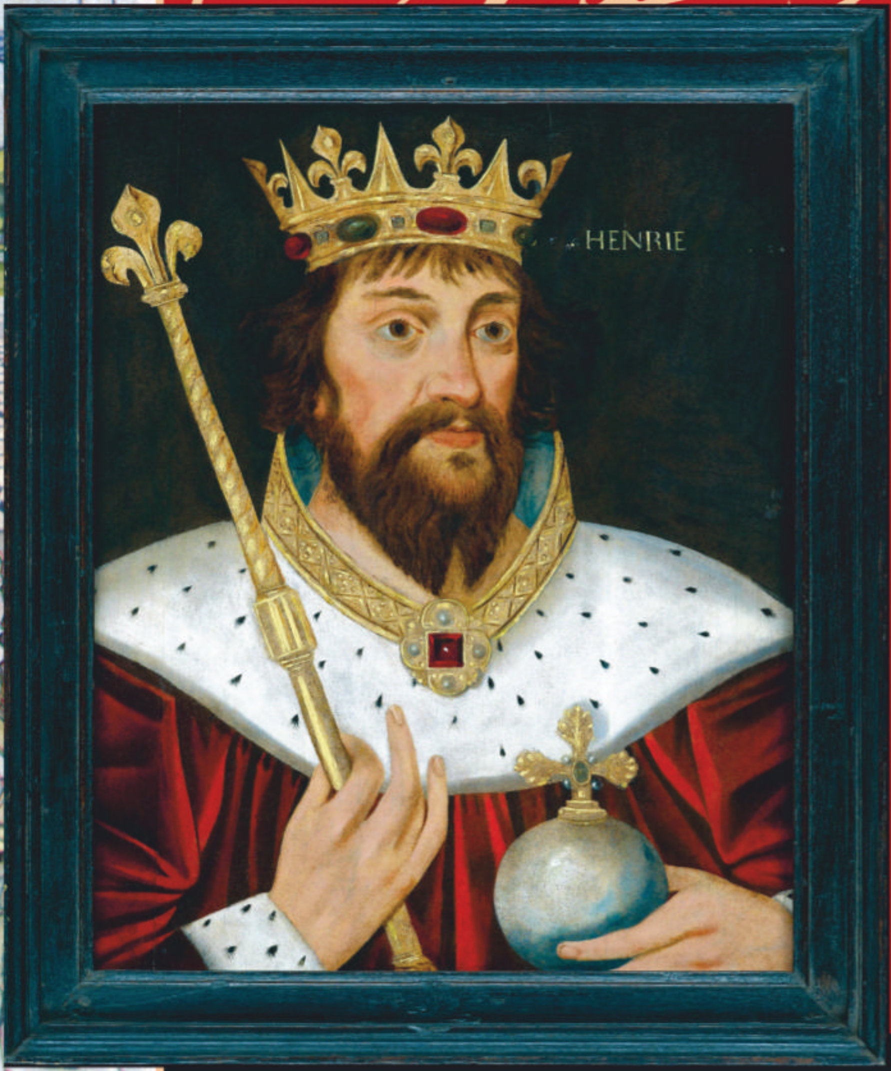
Discover the politics, prevalence and prominence of Britain's royal illegitimate children from the Norman Conquest to today

Written by Emily Staniforth

With a hereditary monarchy in Britain, the kings and queens of the United Kingdom have all tended to be preoccupied by one thing – having children. Marriages were judged by how quickly a royal couple became pregnant, and courtiers waited with bated breath to discover the gender of the monarch's children. Royal wives were shamed for their inability to conceive or birth a living child. And while the creation and survival of legitimate royal children was a matter of interest for the public, so too was the fate of children who were born out of royal wedlock.

Many of Britain's kings have fathered illegitimate children. In fact, it would be more pertinent to ask which of England's historical kings did not have at least one child outside of their marriage. While there is no evidence that William the Conqueror (r.1066-87) or his son William II (r.1087 – 1100) had any children outside of their marriages, the majority of kings who came after them certainly did. Henry I (r.1100-35), England's third king after the Norman Conquest, was the proud father of around 25 illegitimate children, making him the monarch with the most children born outside of wedlock. Charles II (r.1660-85) had at least 14 illegitimate offspring with a number of different women, and William IV (r.1830-37) fathered 10 children with his mistress of many years, Irish actress Dorothea Jordan.





ABOVE-LEFT Charles II was notorious for his many public affairs with a number of mistresses

ABOVE-RIGHT Henry I fathered at least 25 illegitimate children, the most of any British royal

Wandering spouses

So why were Britain's kings straying from their wives and why were illegitimate royal children so commonplace? For centuries, the business of finding a wife as the king of England was more a matter of politics than of romantic love. Alliances with other nations or strengthening relationships with Britain's most prominent families took precedence, and brides were often selected from small pools of potential candidates drawn up by advisors and politicians. As such, many royal marriages were unhappy ones: Charles II in particular was noted for how much he appeared to dislike his wife Catherine of Braganza, and Edward II (r.1307-27) was deposed thanks to the efforts of his wife Isabella of France to remove him from the throne. And let's not even get started on Henry VIII (r.1509-47) and his conveyor belt of wives!

As a result of these strained marriages, it was not unusual for kings to engage in extramarital relationships. In fact, it was almost expected that a king would have mistresses. Those who did remain faithful to their wives are unusual in England's royal history and stand as anomalies; there is no proven evidence that either William the Conqueror or Henry VII (r.1485 - 1509) took mistresses and they were known to be completely devoted to their wives. But taking a mistress did not always signify an unhappy marriage. At the royal court, marriage was a solemn business that served a purpose, namely producing an heir to the throne. For many kings, marriage was a matter of duty while a mistress provided fun, sex and friendship.

Being a royal mistress

The taking of a mistress (or in some cases several) became such an established practice of kingship that it is not surprising that many royal wives simply accepted their husband's affairs as a part of their marriage. Some kings were discreet in their affairs, and in these circumstances it was possible for queens to ignore what their husbands were doing behind closed doors. However, some of England's kings conducted their extramarital relationships for all to see, appearing in public with their chosen mistresses and showering them with luxuries. Mistresses were often rewarded for their proximity to the king: their families were elevated at court and they were given extravagant gifts, and having the ear of the king gave them enhanced political power in a patriarchal society. This meant being the king's mistress was sometimes viewed as a coveted role. Charles II was notoriously indiscreet about his many extramarital partners, in particular with Barbara Villiers, who was sometimes referred to as England's 'Uncrowned Queen' due to her influence at court. Though royal wives may have objected, there was nothing they could really do. Being married to England's most powerful man had its advantages, but also its downside.

Acknowledging bastard children

Of course, the many affairs of England's kings led to lots of children. Birth control was either non-existent or primitive and engaging in any antics in the royal bedchamber always carried

All images: © Alamy, © Getty Images

the risk of pregnancy. But as mistresses were an accepted part of a royal marriage, illegitimate children were not as troublesome as might be expected. For many monarchs, having children signified their virility and prowess to the rest of the world. The more offspring sired, the stronger and more fertile the king. When royal children were born to their mistresses, many kings of the medieval and early modern periods decided to publicly acknowledge them.

One of the most infamous illegitimate royal children in Britain's history is Henry Fitzroy, the son of Tudor tyrant Henry VIII. Born in 1519 to Henry's mistress Elizabeth Blount, Fitzroy was the only illegitimate child Henry formally acknowledged during the king's lifetime. At the time of Fitzroy's birth, Henry had been married to his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, for ten years, during which Queen Catherine had only been able to give birth to one living child, their daughter Mary. Concerned with the line of succession, Henry had become increasingly frustrated by his lack of a son and heir. The birth of Henry Fitzroy provided the perfect opportunity to declare to the world that he could father a boy. By publicly acknowledging his son, Henry salvaged his public image, proved he could fulfil his duty to provide an heir, and lay the blame for his lack of a royal heir at the door or his wife. While it was technically illegal for an illegitimate child to inherit the throne, many historians believe that Henry was positioning Fitzroy to be his heir if he did not manage to have a legitimate son. At one point, it was even suggested that Fitzroy be married to Henry's daughter Mary as a way to ensure a Tudor succession but, luckily, this plan never came to fruition. Fitzroy died in 1536 at just 17 years old, and a year later Henry VIII's son Edward was born to his third wife Jane Seymour.

"William the Conqueror was, himself, an illegitimate child"

A king laying claim to his illegitimate children also served another purpose. There are no closer ties than those of family, and populating your court with your own offspring was a way to ensure loyalty and support. Henry I quickly realised that his many children were excellent pawns in foreign diplomacy and started arranging marriages between them and the powerful noble families of Europe. Through his matchmaking, Henry's illegitimate daughter Sybilla ended up becoming the queen of Scotland through her marriage to Alexander I.

The benefits of being a bastard

Being a recognised illegitimate child of a British monarch offered certain advantages. As a known family member of the king, your status was elevated, and once you had been formally recognised it was usual to be provided for by the monarch. Titles were granted to both legitimate and illegitimate children alike by many kings, with some illegitimate royal children becoming powerful figures in English society. Dukedoms and earldoms were commonly given to illegitimate sons, and these titles were often accompanied by gifts of land. For example, John of Gloucester, the only recognised illegitimate son of Richard III (r.1483-85), was given the prominent status of Captain of Calais by his father in 1485. Illegitimate daughters were more likely to be married to English or foreign noblemen than given titles of their own, but these marriages often came with titles attached. Joan, the daughter of King John (r.1199 - 1216), became Lady of Wales through her marriage to Llywelyn the Great, and at least two of Charles II's illegitimate daughters became countesses when they married earls.

Some illegitimate children devoted themselves to the Church, a traditional path taken by many children of monarchs who were not destined for the throne. Geoffrey, the son of Henry II (r.1154-89), was steered towards a religious life by his father and was sent to school before taking holy orders as a teenager. He later became the Archbishop of York, one of the most coveted positions in the Catholic Church in England. The illegitimate son of King Stephen (r.1135-54), Gervase of Blois, became the Abbot of Westminster, a position to which he was appointed by his father despite being much younger and less experienced than others who had occupied the role.

Though illegitimate children were often given titles, there was one huge drawback to being born to a mistress - illegitimate children were not allowed to inherit the throne. For monarchs like Henry I, this must have been a kick in the teeth. With at least 27 recognised children (two legitimate and 25 illegitimate), his throne should have been secure and guaranteed to pass down his family line. However, after the death of his one legitimate son, his daughter Matilda had

BELOW
Rumours of a secret illegitimate child surrounded Queen Victoria's daughter Princess Louise

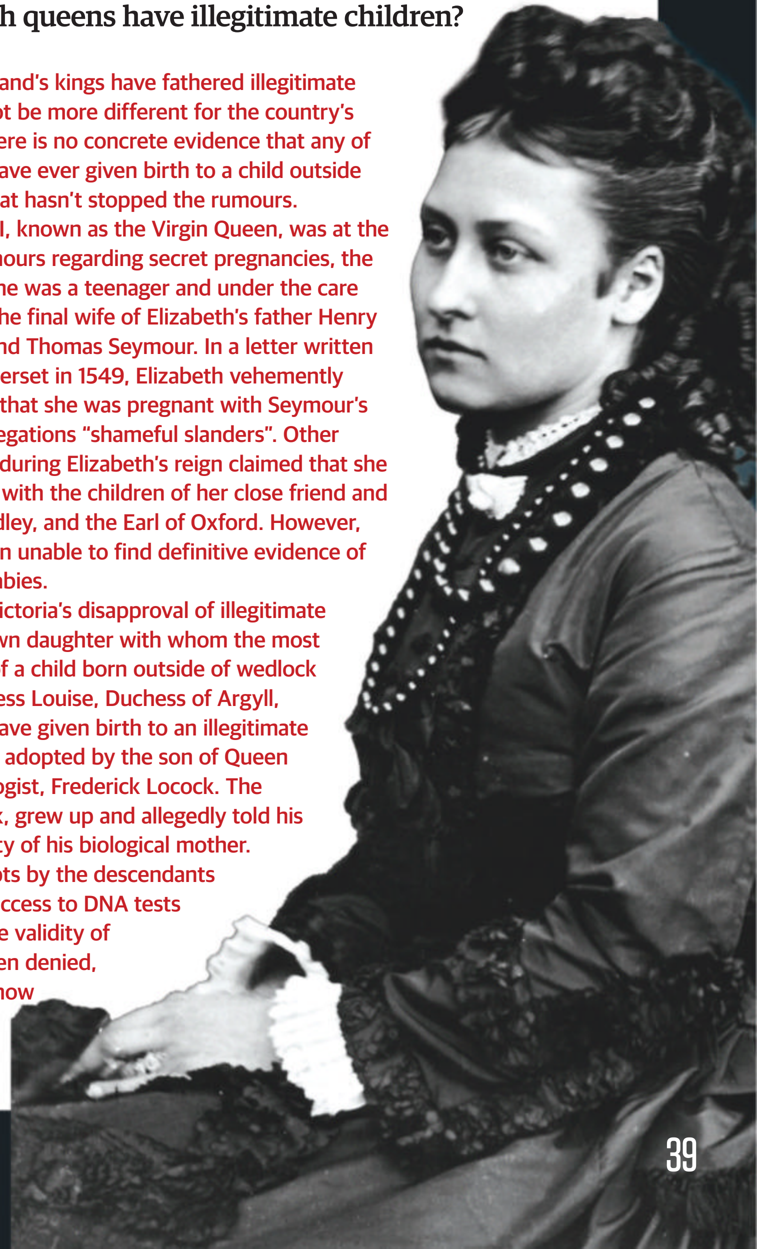
VIRTUOUS QUEENS

Did any English queens have illegitimate children?

While many of England's kings have fathered illegitimate children, it could not be more different for the country's historic queens. There is no concrete evidence that any of England's queens have ever given birth to a child outside of wedlock… but that hasn't stopped the rumours.

Queen Elizabeth I, known as the Virgin Queen, was at the centre of many rumours regarding secret pregnancies, the first arising when she was a teenager and under the care of Katherine Parr (the final wife of Elizabeth's father Henry VIII) and her husband Thomas Seymour. In a letter written to the Duke of Somerset in 1549, Elizabeth vehemently denied the rumour that she was pregnant with Seymour's child, calling the allegations "shameful slanders". Other rumours circulated during Elizabeth's reign claimed that she had been pregnant with the children of her close friend and advisor, Robert Dudley, and the Earl of Oxford. However, historians have been unable to find definitive evidence of any secret Tudor babies.

Despite Queen Victoria's disapproval of illegitimate children, it is her own daughter with whom the most pervasive rumour of a child born outside of wedlock is associated. Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll, was purported to have given birth to an illegitimate child who was then adopted by the son of Queen Victoria's gynaecologist, Frederick Locock. The baby, Henry Locock, grew up and allegedly told his family of the identity of his biological mother. Subsequent attempts by the descendants of Locock to have access to DNA tests that could prove the validity of their claim have been denied, so we may never know if the extraordinary story is true.



to fight her cousin Stephen for the throne. The relationship between Matilda and one of her half-brothers was invaluable during this time, with Robert, Earl of Gloucester (possibly the oldest of all Henry I's illegitimate offspring), being her strongest supporter. Unfortunately, Matilda never inherited the crown.

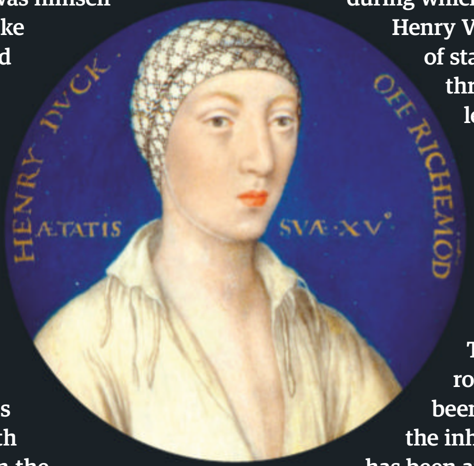
Despite illegitimacy being a barrier to the monarchy, illegitimate children have sat on England's throne. The most notable was William the Conqueror, who was himself an illegitimate child. He was the son of Duke Robert I of Normandy and a woman named Herleve, who may have been a lowly tanner's daughter. Although his parents were unmarried, William was named as his father's heir. This, however, did little to stop his contemporaries from referring to him as William the Bastard.

It is also important to remember that throughout its history, British society derived its moral and ethical values through the Church, which prized the sanctity of marriage and frowned upon children born outside of wedlock. As such, being an illegitimate child came with a certain amount of stigma attached. Even the illegitimate children of kings were viewed differently to their legitimate peers, despite the favour they were often shown by the monarch.

Simmering threats

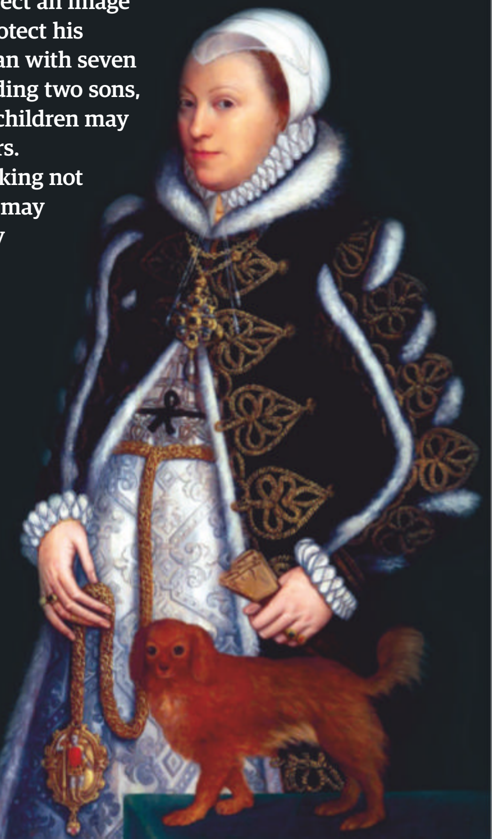
Though many of the illegitimate children of British royals were recognised by their respective fathers, some never were. In the case of Edward IV (r.1461-83), there is evidence that he only acknowledged one of the many illegitimate children he may have fathered. This may have simply been because he did not believe he was the father of other rumoured children, but it also could have been linked to the fact that Edward occupied the English throne at a tumultuous time. Throughout his reign, and afterwards, England was in the middle of a bitter civil war fought between the houses of York and Lancaster, during which Edward had taken the throne from Henry VI. Edward needed to project an image of stability to his people to protect his throne, and as a married man with seven legitimate children, including two sons, recognising illegitimate children may have muddied the waters.

Another reason for a king not to acknowledge a child may have been because they were viewed as a threat to the line of succession. Throughout England's royal history, there have been many occasions where the inheritance of the Crown has been anything but smooth, with civil wars fought and family members at odds. There have also been several purported claimants to the English throne who have been used as figureheads for rebellion against the Crown. Illegitimate children, who did not legally have a right to inherit but may have believed strongly in their moral rights, could be troublesome.



BELOW-LEFT Henry Fitzroy was the only recognised illegitimate child of Henry VIII

BELOW Catherine Carey was believed to have been the daughter of Henry VIII, though he never confirmed this or acknowledged her



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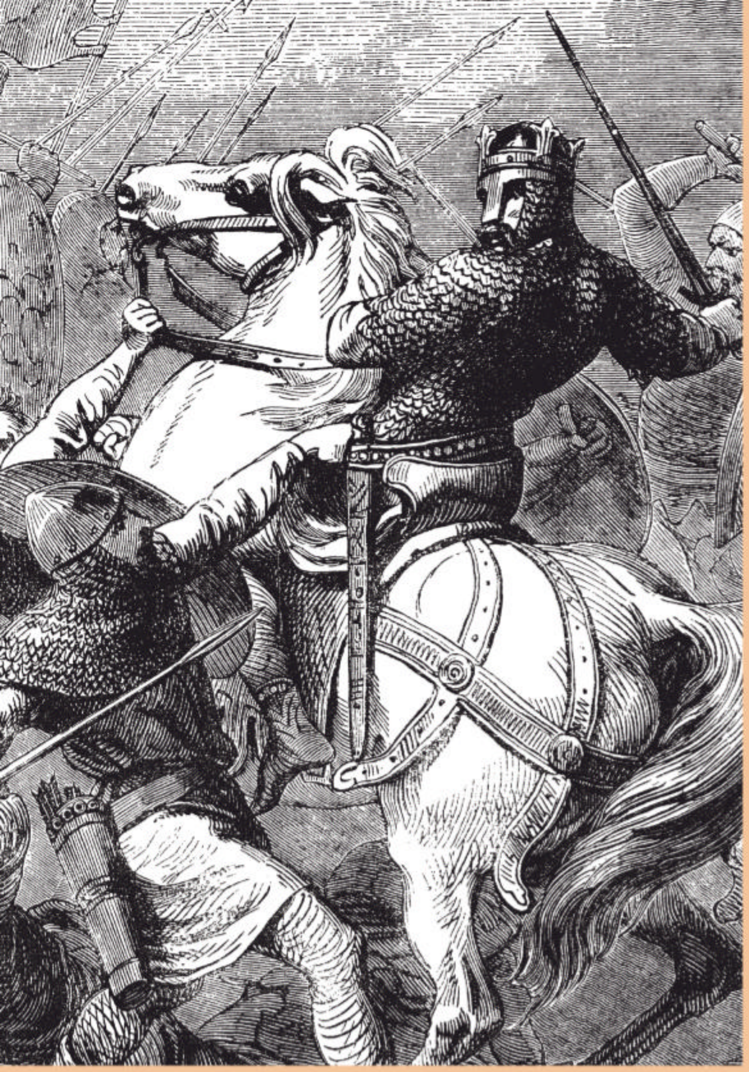

THE FITZ FAMILY NAME

Why were so many illegitimate royal children given a similar surname?

When looking through the identities of the known illegitimate children of British kings, it quickly becomes apparent that many of them share the same or similar surnames. Fitzroy is one of the most commonly occurring names of illegitimate children in royal British history. Anglo-Norman in origin, the translation of the name makes sense when attributed to illegitimate royals: 'Fitz' means 'son of' and 'roy' means 'king'. Thus, Fitzroy literally translates as 'the son of the king'. By giving their illegitimate offspring this name, royal children could be identified and validated in public.

Variations of Fitzroy also feature heavily in the list of illegitimate royal children. Though many of Charles II's children were given the surname Fitzroy, one of his sons was named Fitzcharles, meaning 'son of Charles'. Similarly, the illegitimate children of James II were assigned the surname Fitzjames. Finally, all the children of William IV and his mistress Dorothea Jordan were named FitzClarence, reflecting the title of Duke of Clarence, which was held by their father prior to him becoming king.

It is important to note that the use of a 'Fitz' name was not limited to just illegitimate sons. Many illegitimate royal daughters were also given a surname starting with 'Fitz'.

ASHBERRY COTTAGE
Here lived
WILLIAM,
DUKE OF CLARENCE
later
KING WILLIAM IV
and
Mrs DOROTHEA
JORDAN
Actress

ABOVE-LEFT During the reign of Queen Victoria, who had nine legitimate children, the existence of illegitimate children became an increasingly shameful subject

ABOVE Empress Matilda's illegitimate brother, Robert of Gloucester, was instrumental in her fight for the Crown and even arrested King Stephen

James Scott, 1st Duke of Monmouth, caused such a problem in 1685 when he laid claim to the English throne and attempted to challenge the rule of his uncle James II (r.1685-88). Monmouth was the illegitimate son of Charles II and his mistress Lucy Walter and had been a favourite of his father. He was an impressive military leader and was elevated by Charles to the position of captain general of all of England's armies. This was clearly not enough for Monmouth, as he was later implicated in the Rye House Plot of 1683, which planned to assassinate both Charles II and his brother. Many contemporaries considered Monmouth to be a potential heir to his father, given Charles' lack of legitimate offspring, but his involvement in the plot likely put a stop to that. Sadly for Monmouth, it was Charles' brother James who took the Crown. With backing from Protestant supporters who opposed the rule of another Catholic king (James II had converted to Catholicism in 1669), Monmouth led a rebellion against the new monarch. However, his forces were quickly defeated by James and Monmouth was arrested, found guilty of treason and beheaded at the Tower of London.

Continuing bloodlines

During the Victorian era, social stigma surrounding illegitimate children increased across all levels of society. Queen Victoria (r.1837 - 1901) referred to her illegitimate cousins as "ghosts best forgotten", and during her 63-year reign the general acceptance of illegitimate royals appeared to subside. By the time her son, Edward VII (r.1901-10), became king, illegitimate children had become a subject of shame and ridicule. As such, Edward VII never acknowledged any of his rumoured illegitimate offspring despite engaging in a number of extramarital affairs. Since the reign of Victoria, no British monarch has admitted to having a child outside of their marriage.

> "Since the reign of Victoria, no British monarch has admitted to having a child outside of their marriage."

Though the existence of potential illegitimate royal children remains shrouded in secrecy to this day, rumours continue to circulate. In recent years, an Australian man who believes he is the son of King Charles III and Queen Camilla has been making headlines around the world. His claims have been strenuously denied by the king and queen. Other speculation sometimes appears in the media questioning whether Prince Harry really is the king's son, an accusation that the royal family strongly refutes. Just as Tudor courtiers speculated that Henry VIII may have been the true father of siblings Catherine and Henry Carey, the children of Henry's known mistress Mary Boleyn, many continue to make suppositions about the legitimacy of the royal family to this day.

Maybe we have always been fascinated by the mysteries of the royal family, an establishment that guards many secrets while operating in public view, precisely because they have so often refused to address such rumours. But regardless of why the topic of illegitimate children has, and remains to be, so intriguing, it is true that the descendants of royal bastards still populate the upper classes of British society: Queen Camilla; Diana, Princess of Wales; and Sarah, Duchess of York (the ex-wife of Prince Andrew) are all descended from illegitimate children of Charles II and Louise de Kérouaille, and former British Prime Minister David Cameron traces his lineage back to an illegitimate child of William IV. Without the existence of illegitimate royal offspring, Britain's political and royal landscape may have looked very different. ○

INDIA'S IRON LADY

Power was Indira Gandhi's destiny… and her downfall

Written by Arisa Loomba

Born in 1917 in an India still under British rule, Indira Gandhi was the only child of India's founding father Jawaharlal Nehru — a central player in India's independence movement and the nation's first prime minister after it won its freedom from the British Empire, serving continuously from 1947 to 1964. Gandhi's rise to the top was written in the stars, and seems almost coincidental and circumstantial. Many believe she was destined to rule India, that her rise to power was inevitable.

Gandhi studied at Somerville College at the University of Oxford and joined the Congress Party in 1938, ascending to its working committee in 1959. From here she continued to climb higher and higher up the ranks of the party. Then, in 1964, everything changed. Following her father's death, the new prime minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri, appointed her as the minister of information and broadcasting. But when Shastri died unexpectedly, to the surprise of some and in a compromise between divided factions of the party it was Gandhi who was named the new leader of the Congress Party and the new prime minister of India. How much of her takeover was planned and meticulously strategised, and how much of it was merely accidental in the face of unexpected circumstances, we may never fully know.

Following on from her father's somewhat left-wing precedent for the path of an independent India, Gandhi pursued moderate taxation, land reforms and nationalisation of major industries, including banking. The Green Revolution, beginning in the mid-1960s, was her effort to address the country's deeply entrenched issue of poverty and malnutrition. It prioritised and promoted agriculture through the introduction of new mechanisation and technology such as bio-engineered seeds, chemical fertilisers and intense irrigation, with the hope that this would increase crop yields. Though undeniably effective in many regions in increasing food supply, it also unintentionally spread harmful chemicals across the countryside and pushed the poorest farmers who could not afford the new equipment even further down in the social hierarchy, exacerbating class divides.

An interesting example of Gandhi's priorities is Operation Flood: a pioneering dairy development programme that eventually put India on the map as the world's largest milk producer. This had both economic and health benefits for the nation, drastically increasing the regular access the average person had to milk, which nourished and strengthened them, while also offering employment opportunities to rural farmers. There was one drawback, though, as suddenly Indians were becoming lactose intolerant after consuming far more milk than they were used to.

Gandhi's wider anti-poverty campaign bore the slogan "Garibi Hatao" (Remove Poverty). She launched the Twenty Point Programme in 1975, which aspired to reduce prices of essential goods, bring down government spending, enhance labour conditions and improve living and working conditions for the poorest in society through a series of measures such as liquidating debt, raising tax exemptions and redistributing surplus land to the landless. However, this form of state socialism became increasingly unpopular during the global recession of the late 1970s, leading many to call for economic growth through liberalism and privatisation, feeling that India was stagnating. This set a precedent for the central Indian government to become increasingly focused on neoliberal economic growth and foreign investment throughout the 1980s and 1990s, as it still is today, overseen initially by Gandhi. Some believe that Gandhi was really a socialist in name only, employing the label as a form of rhetoric to win support from the poorer masses. Indeed, many think that she was more about image and reputation than commitment to politics, and that she maintained power by placing her personality, rather than politics, at the forefront.

Though attempting to be a saviour of the people, she was incredibly controversial and vehemently hated by many. She led a heavily criticised military conflict to protect the Himalayas from the approaching Chinese military, and steered India in the direction of the communist world by signing a friendship treaty with the Soviet Union in return for military, financial and diplomatic support. When East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) wished to gain ▶

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independence from West Pakistan (now Pakistan), where a central government controlled both vastly different (geographically and culturally) stretches of land, Gandhi's government wholeheartedly and rapidly supported East Pakistan's breakaway attempts. The Indian armed forces, with Soviet help, swept in and were quick to defeat West Pakistan, catalysing the creation of two separate countries on either side of North India: Pakistan and Bangladesh. Thousands of Bengalis were made homeless and sought refuge in India.

Major secessionist movements caused unrest in both corners of North India, not just without but also within the country's borders. Both the northwestern state of Punjab and the northeastern state of Assam were gathering support to exit the state of India and become independent countries, given their vast differences with the rest of India and sense of marginalisation. Gandhi's huge impact on the northeastern region and its future cannot be understated. In the wake of significant ethnic violence in Assam and Nagaland, she broke up and reduced the size of the large state of Assam and reorganised the region by creating the new states of Meghalaya, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Tripura. Simultaneously, Bengali refugees pouring across the Bangladeshi border into Assam and Tripura changed the demographics of the region forever.

But unrest across the region would not stop. The legacies of Gandhi's interventions in the northeast persist today: the use of military force, still-unresolved border disputes and the sense the region was seen purely as a strategic and resource-rich frontier for the government planted bitterness and tensions within the region and in its attitude towards the rest of India. Many believe her policies failed to address the true deep-rooted causes of ethnic tensions and economic neglect, instead only looking at surface-level symptoms. They were seen as having imposed a pan-Indian approach on the region that did not understand the complexities of their diverse groups and histories and were not appropriate for the situation.

Her greatest blunder, however, was dubbed the 'Emergency' – a period of 19 months during which she ruled as a dictator and turned India into an authoritarian state. It was triggered by a landslide victory for the Congress Party in the 1972 elections, a cause for celebration until it was quickly tainted by the Socialist Party claiming that Gandhi had violated the laws of a democratic election. Amid all of this, Gandhi was also coming under fire for widespread social revolts against high prices and corruption and the effects of a world recession upon the economy. Communism was growing as a political force in response to all of this, as was factionalism within Congress, weakening her position further. Many were unhappy with her militaristic approach to China and her willingness to freely arrest lower-caste political opponents.

ABOVE-LEFT Indira Gandhi as a young girl with her father Jawaharlal Nehru. Her ancestry boasts a powerful lineage of Indian politicians, thinkers and activists

ABOVE-RIGHT Indira Gandhi did not get her name from any relation to Mahatma Gandhi (pictured with her here in 1924), but from her marriage to fellow Congress Party member Feroze Gandhi

In 1975, the High Court of Allahabad ruled that the prime minister had indeed committed malpractice. Such a ruling would have deprived Gandhi of her parliamentary seat and required her to steer clear of politics for six years. She appealed to the Supreme Court, to no avail. In response, in June 1975, not long after Congress had been defeated in elections in the state of Gujarat, Gandhi took the decision to trigger – without valid reason and in violation of her responsibility towards the citizens of the nation – a constitutional provision that, in extreme circumstances, could suspend democratic procedures.

Life during Gandhi's Emergency was tough and restricted. During this time she suspended all civil liberties and constitutional rights. She threw several hundred political opponents straight into prison and quickly curtailed the freedom of the press. Many controversial measures included clearing out slum dwellings in Delhi and forcibly sterilising working-class men on a mass scale as a form of 'birth control'. This continued uninterrupted until March of 1977. At this point Gandhi had become so controversial that she was left with no choice but to call an election, in which she was, unsurprisingly, defeated. She also found herself imprisoned for a little over a year on charges of political corruption.

Congress was crushed by the Janata Party, a merger party combining a number of parties across the political spectrum normally opposed to one another but here united by the need to end the Emergency as quickly as possible. Gandhi's fall from power signalled the end of the Emergency and was seen as a victory for democracy.

Shockingly, all of these events did not spell the end for Gandhi's political career, nor even her time in power. Splitting off to form a new version of the party, Gandhi won a new seat in the Lok Sabha (Lower House) in November 1978. The now-ruling Janata Party – formed in

ABOVE Despite her time as prime minister ending in defeat, controversy and a prison term, Gandhi returned to politics later in life

haste and in reality not fit to rule the country – began to fall apart, not helped by the mass upheavals and insurrections spreading among the lower and middle classes, farmers and the working class, trade unions and students, all fighting for their rights in the wake of the Emergency. Gandhi did not miss a beat, and she was back in power as the leader of the Congress and the prime minister of India by January 1980, winning the Lok Sabha elections and ushering in a further two terms in power.

Just five months later, on 31 October 1984, Gandhi was assassinated in her garden by two of her Sikh bodyguards as revenge for the attack on the Golden Temple. She had been warned to replace these guards for her own safety but scoffed at the idea, a decision that cost Gandhi her life. Her murder sparked a horrific backlash against the Sikh population at large, with thousands of Sikhs brutally attacked and killed nationwide, particularly in Delhi, where violence was orchestrated by the Congress leaders themselves.

"GANDHI BROUGHT A BRUTAL, VIOLENT END TO INDIA'S PEACE-SEEKING, LEFT-WING, SECULAR CONSENSUS"

There was never a dull moment in Gandhi's life or political career. She seemed to make enemies everywhere she turned through her willingness to resort to military interference and violence, particularly in domestic matters. But eventually her penchant for authoritarianism spelled the beginning of her own demise in her dealings with the predominantly Sikh Punjabi secessionist movement. The movement utilised terrorist tactics to gain attention from the central government, but at its heart it was a small movement that really wanted greater state autonomy rather than independence. However, Gandhi's government drastically escalated the situation by sending the Indian Army to attack Sikhs who had been occupying their most sacred and holy site, the Golden Temple, for the past two years.

Known as Operation Blue Start, the assault is estimated to have cost 450 lives, though many believe far more Sikhs were murdered, and the Golden Temple was permanently marked by the gunfire.

Gandhi's death marked a destabilising moment in which Indian politics shifted forever, trending towards coalition governments and increasingly violent caste and separatist politics. At both ends of the political spectrum, communism and right-wing religious extremism in the name of Hindu nationalism gathered unprecedented support. She brought a brutal, violent end to the peace-seeking, left-wing, secular consensus upheld by Nehru that kept alive the spirit of Mahatma Gandhi and the promises of an independent India. Most crucially, following the Emergency, there was an explosion in attempts to preserve and uphold India's democratic nature through the judiciary and the media in particular, both of whom became self-appointed watchdogs against authoritarianism, poised and ready to call it out. The Emergency highlighted to Indians just how essential a role democracy played in the country and how far its citizens would go to protect their freedoms.

LIKE MOTHER, LIKE SON

When Indira Gandhi returned to power after the Emergency, she decided it was time to prep and prime her successor because, naturally, she wanted to keep that power within the family. At first she groomed her son Sanjay for leadership, appointing him as her chief political advisor. But following his death in a plane crash in 1980, she turned her attention to her son Rajiv. After her death in 1984, Rajiv ascended to power without a hitch, not unlike Gandhi had years earlier after her father's death. In more echoes of his mother's life, Rajiv was also mired in controversy and was forced to resign in 1989.

He was assassinated in 1991 in the southern state of Tamil Nadu. The murderer was a Sri Lankan Tamil suicide bomber who was protesting the involvement of an Indian 'peacekeeping force' (the army) that had been stationed in Sri Lanka to assist its government in handling another separatist terrorist group, the Tamil Tigers. The Tamils, a Dravidian ethno-linguistic group that spans southern India and Sri Lanka, had been treated poorly by the largely Sinhalese nation of Sri Lanka and the non-Dravidian northern Indian populace, and the Tamil Tigers were demanding change through violent terrorist means.

It was at this point that the generations-long Nehru dynasty was finally brought down, having presided over Indian politics and the development of the young nation since its first moment of freedom from the British in 1947. Yet it seems that their downfall actually came from the legacy left by the British Empire, which had created a vast, sprawling hodgepodge nation called India, one that would never have otherwise been unified.

India is a nation whose internal and external borders were drawn clumsily in 1947 by Brits with no regard for locals' opinions on the best places to put them. As a result, it was far too culturally, ethnically, linguistically and religiously diverse to remain peaceful for long, and this would perhaps be the greatest and deadliest challenge for the Nehru dynasty and their Congress governments as they sought to direct post-Independence India towards a peaceful, democratic and prosperous future.

Rajiv Gandhi lighting his murdered mother's funeral pyre. He would soon face the same fate

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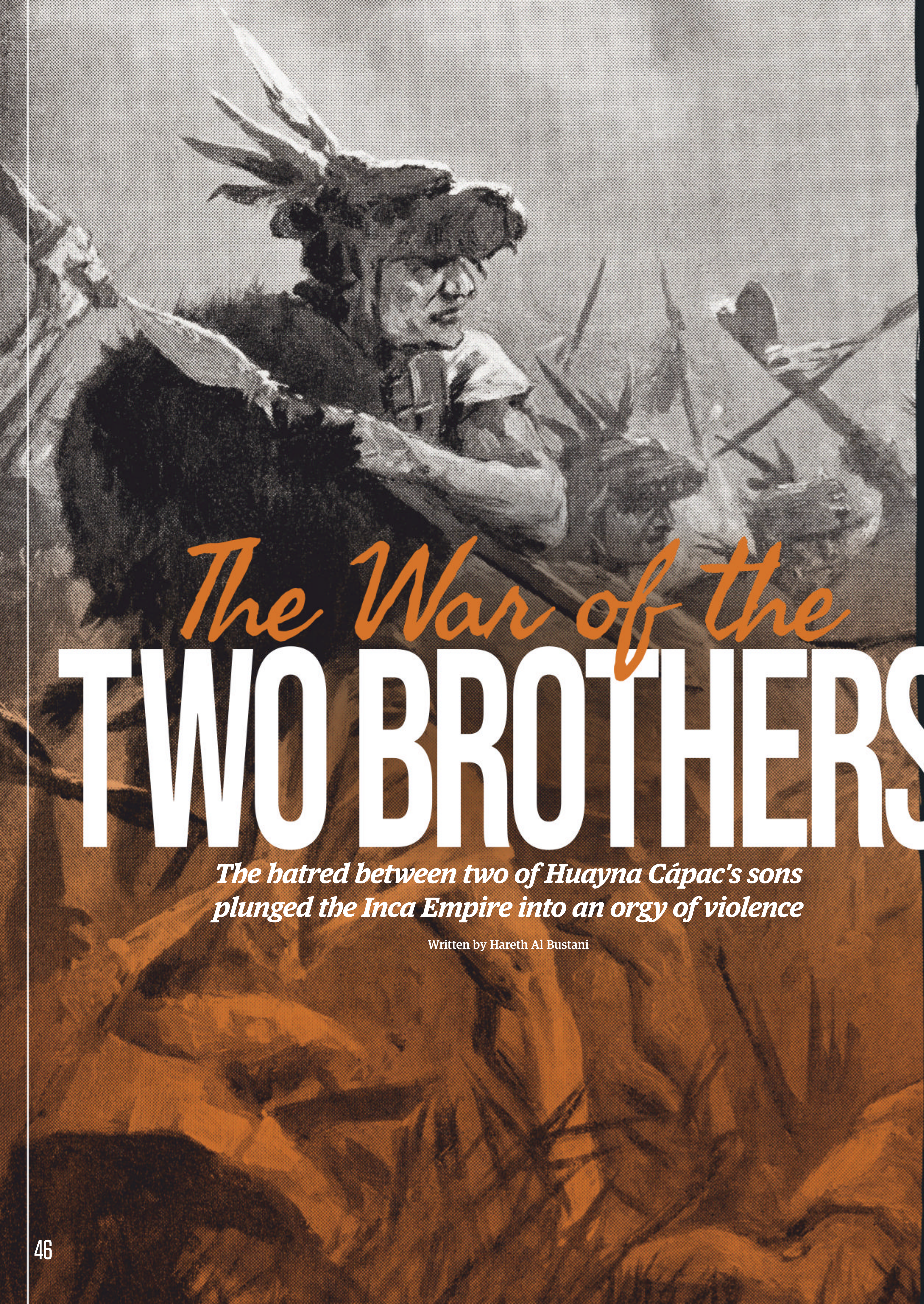
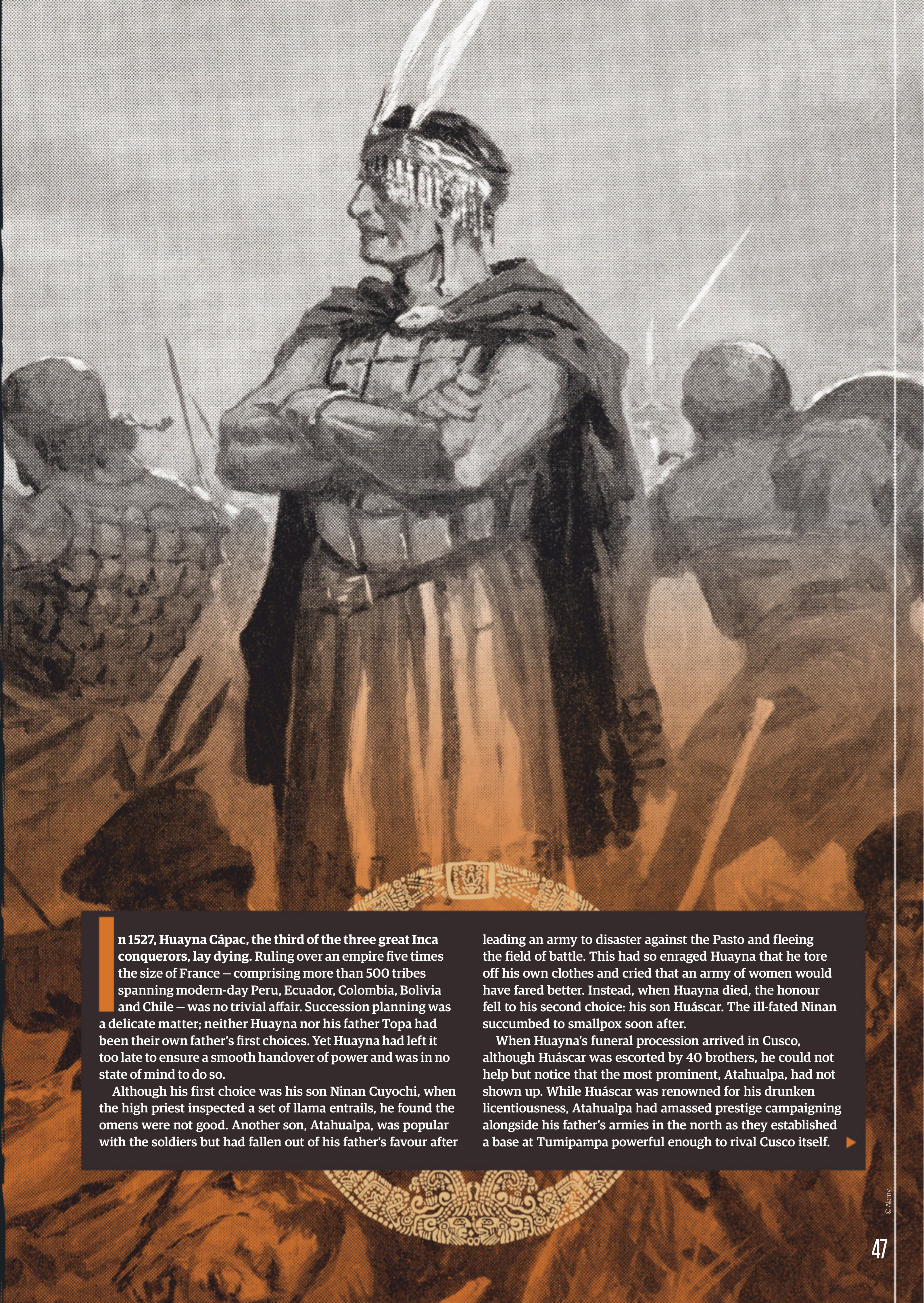


The War of the TWO BROTHERS

The hatred between two of Huayna Cápac's sons plunged the Inca Empire into an orgy of violence

Written by Hareth Al Bustani



In 1527, Huayna Cápac, the third of the three great Inca conquerors, lay dying. Ruling over an empire five times the size of France — comprising more than 500 tribes spanning modern-day Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Bolivia and Chile — was no trivial affair. Succession planning was a delicate matter; neither Huayna nor his father Topa had been their own father's first choices. Yet Huayna had left it too late to ensure a smooth handover of power and was in no state of mind to do so.

Although his first choice was his son Ninan Cuyochi, when the high priest inspected a set of llama entrails, he found the omens were not good. Another son, Atahualpa, was popular with the soldiers but had fallen out of his father's favour after leading an army to disaster against the Pasto and fleeing the field of battle. This had so enraged Huayna that he tore off his own clothes and cried that an army of women would have fared better. Instead, when Huayna died, the honour fell to his second choice: his son Huáscar. The ill-fated Ninan succumbed to smallpox soon after.

When Huayna's funeral procession arrived in Cusco, although Huáscar was escorted by 40 brothers, he could not help but notice that the most prominent, Atahualpa, had not shown up. While Huáscar was renowned for his drunken licentiousness, Atahualpa had amassed prestige campaigning alongside his father's armies in the north as they established a base at Tumipampa powerful enough to rival Cusco itself. ▶

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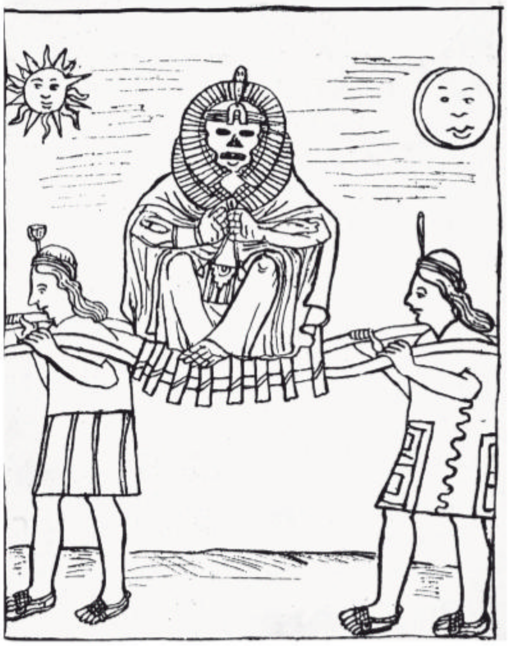

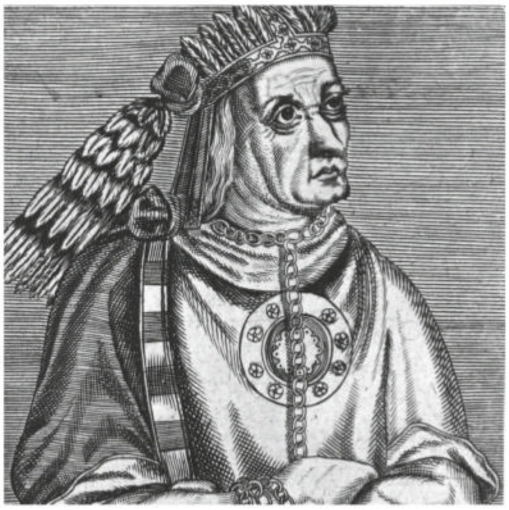

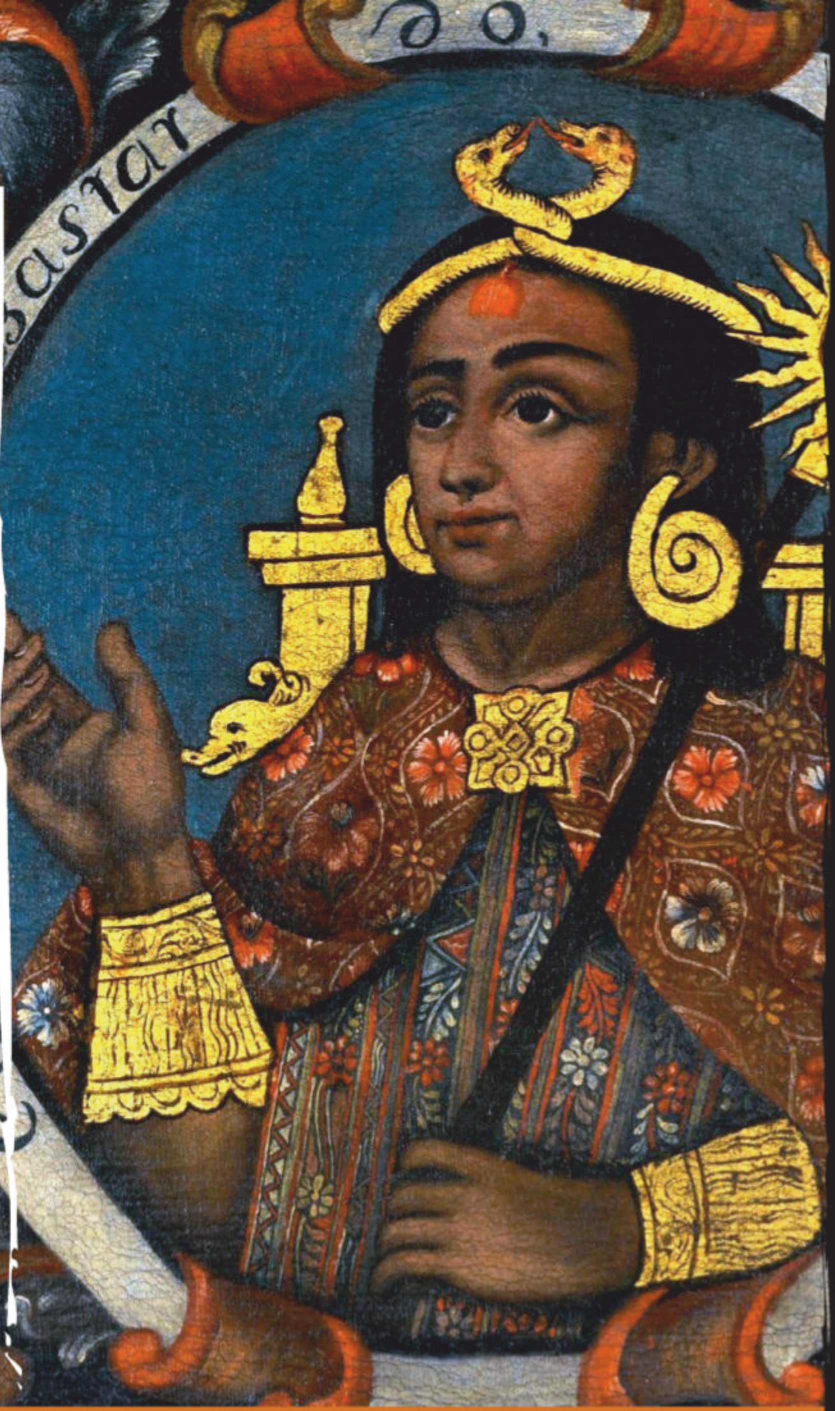

FAR-LEFT Huáscar stripped the panaca of their sacred role as caretakers of the Inca mummies

LEFT Having fought alongside Huayna Cápac's elite northern army, Atahualpa was joined by the empire's finest warriors

BELOW-LEFT Atahualpa had fallen out of favour with his father after a disastrous defeat against the Pasto

RIGHT Upper Cusco sided with Atahualpa and the military, while Lower Cusco backed Huáscar and the religious hierarchy

FAR-RIGHT Atahualpa's victory celebrations would prove short-lived

Huáscar knew from his northern allies, such as the Cañari, how popular Atahualpa was with the empire's elite warriors, and he worried that his brother might already be plotting against him. After all, the Inca capital itself was divided. Upper Cusco, where Atahualpa was from, was intrinsically linked with the army, while Lower Cusco, Huáscar's home, was loyal to the priestly hierarchy of Coricancha. To the religious establishment, Huáscar's appointment presented a precious opportunity to neuter the military's growing influence.

Although Atahualpa had not outwardly given his brother any reason to suspect him, to Huáscar his absence alone was reason enough. Huayna's mummified corpse had not even reached the city before Huáscar had driven himself into a blind rage, screaming at his Upper Cusco nobles for failing to bring his brother with them and accusing them of plotting a coup on his behalf. When even under torture they maintained their innocence, Huáscar had them killed, which the other Upper Cusco nobles understandably took as their cue to flee north to the sanctuary of Atahualpa's stronghold.

Meanwhile, a very real plot to kill the emperor and replace him with one of his other brothers was only discovered when the conspirators approached a Huáscar loyalist, who promptly outed them. Though Huáscar quickly had the would-be assassins executed, the incident only further fuelled his paranoia.

Up north, Atahualpa was busying himself with the construction of several new palaces for Huáscar in Tumipampa. However, a local chief took a disliking to him and wrote to Huáscar implying that the works were ostentatious symbols of Atahualpa's treasonous intent. Enraged, Huáscar this time screamed at his mother and sister, blaming them for leaving Atahualpa in Tumipampa with his father's senior northern generals.

> "Huascar worried that his brother might already be plotting against him"

Soon after, Atahualpa sent his brother a customary series of luxurious gifts to congratulate him on his coronation. Rather than staking any sort of claim, he asked his brother to appoint him to the lesser post of governor of Quito. However, the gesture sent a short-fused (perhaps drunk) Huáscar over the edge. He tortured and killed his brother's messengers and had their skins turned into drums. He left a few alive so they could carry back his own 'gift' to his brother: a bundle of women's clothes, jewels and cosmetics – quite the slap in the face for a son of the great Huayna Cápac.

RIGHT Terrified of their waning influence, the religious hierarchy saw Huáscar as a means of keeping the military at bay

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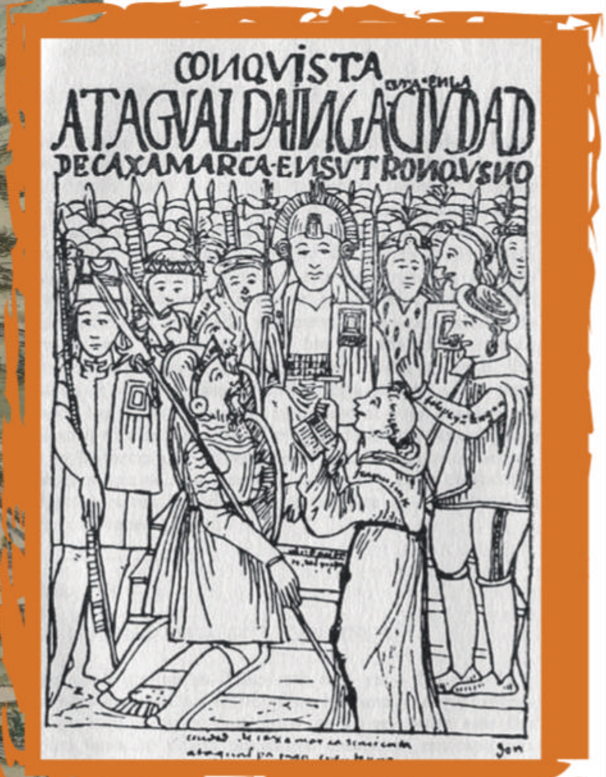

Despite living side by side with Atahualpa, the Cañari remained loyal to Huáscar, insisting to the emperor that his brother's continued presence in the north was the gravest of threats. Convinced, Huáscar sent three successive envoys demanding Atahualpa come to Cusco or else be dragged there by an army.

At this point, for Atahualpa, having seen so many people tortured and butchered by his vengeful brother, surrender was not an option. Moreover, with the bulk of the empire's finest soldiers and captains at his side, the odds were in his favour. Sensing their fates were now tied to his, Atahualpa's generals formally threw in their lot with him. Civil war had come to the Inca Empire.

Not one to fight his own battles, Huáscar sent his general Atoc north to launch a pre-emptive attack on Tumipampa before Atahualpa had a chance to rally his army. In the ensuing chaos, as Atahualpa defended the city's main bridge, he was captured by Atoc and his Cañari allies and locked in a stone warehouse.

Later that night, as his captors drank and revelled in their swift success, Atahualpa used a metal bar – gifted to him by a lady visitor – to painstakingly make a hole in the wall. The party outside was so debauched that no one noticed as he slipped out of his makeshift prison and into the darkness beyond.

When Atahualpa returned to his men, they couldn't believe their eyes. Sensing an opportunity, he propagandised the incident, claiming that his father, the Sun, had transformed him into a serpent

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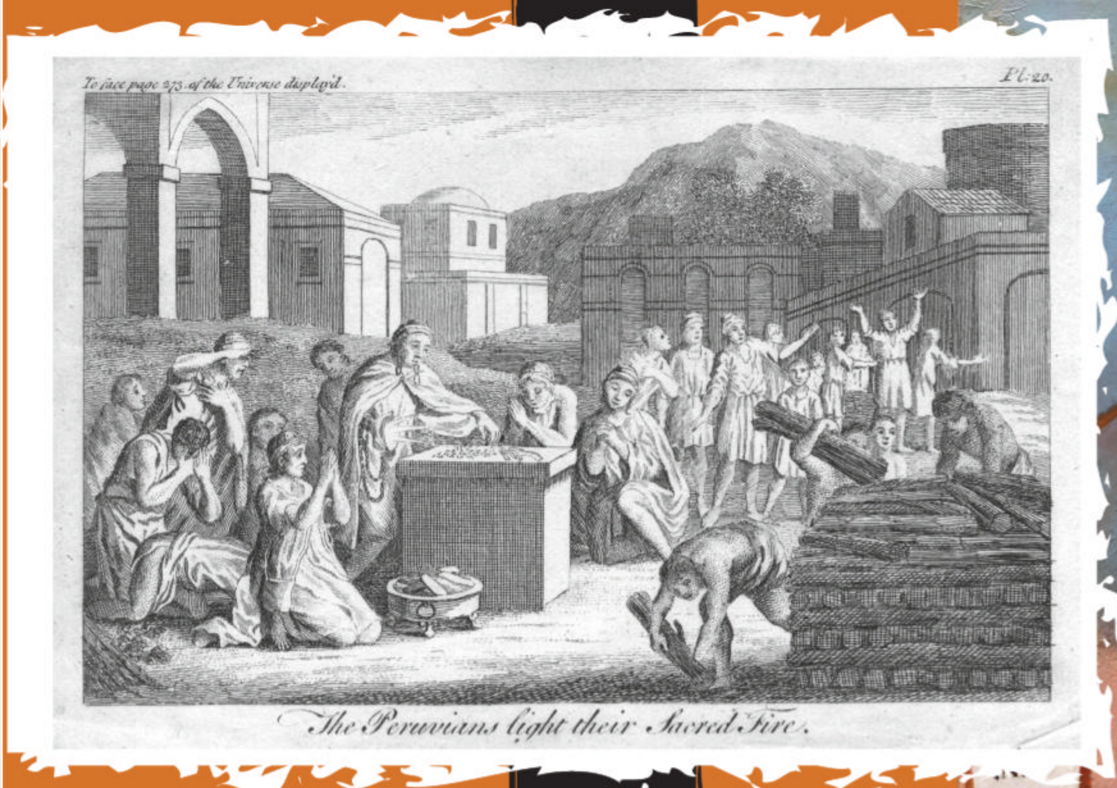
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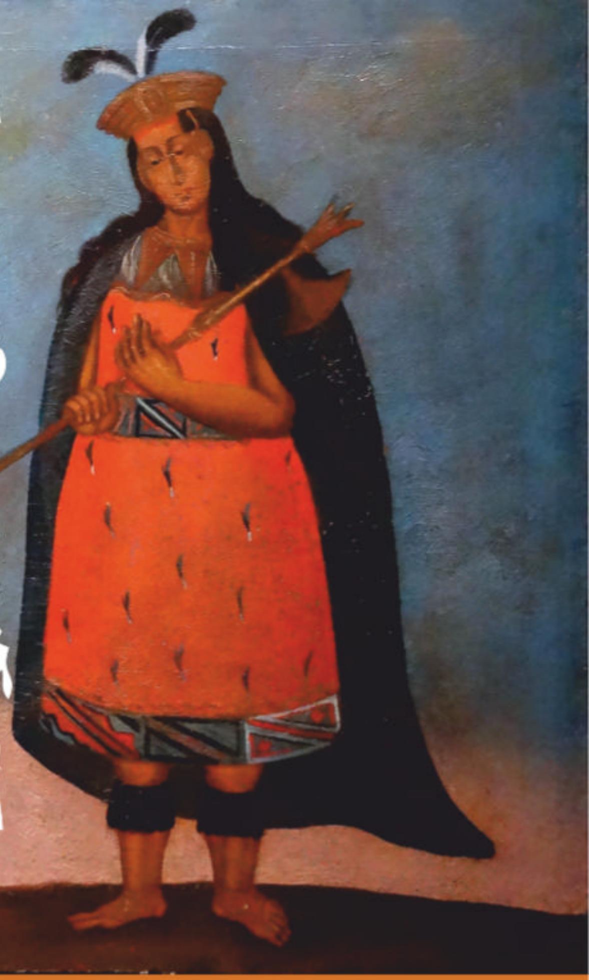
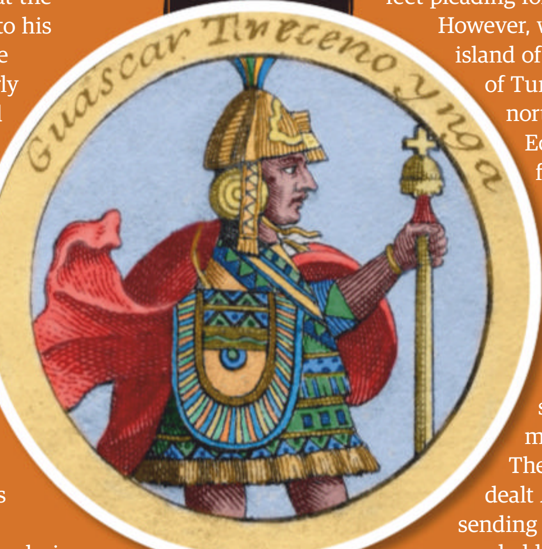
Pl. 20.
The Peruvians light their Sacred Fire.



ABOVE Inca priests light the sacred fires around 1450

ABOVE-RIGHT The paranoid Huáscar refused to socialise with his nobles and elites, and replaced his bodyguards with foreigners

BELOW Huáscar rapidly earned a reputation as a frivolous ruler more interested in drinking than martial pursuits



so he could slip through a small hole in the wall. Bleeding from one of his ears, which he had torn during his great escape, Atahualpa vowed to exact revenge on the accursed Cañari. But first he had to deal with his brother's general, Atoc, 'the Fox'.

After gathering a formidable army at Quito, he began his long march south. Just beyond the city of Ambato in the plains of Mochacaxa, he met the army of Atoc. Unfortunately for Atoc, the empire's finest warriors and generals were on the opposing side – his inexperienced men had been cobbled together at the last minute and were promptly overrun.

Atahualpa was not one to forget a grudge. He was still enraged at the cruelty his brother had dealt to his messengers, and knew that he would have suffered a similarly grisly fate had he not escaped Atoc's clutches. Returning the favour, Atahualpa had Atoc tortured and slowly killed with arrows and darts before allegedly turning his skull into a gilded drinking cup. Not one to rest on his laurels, Atahualpa pressed on to Cañari territory, storming the city of Tumipampa and unleashing hell upon its populace. His grandfather's mighty city soon lay in ruins.

He continued down the Ecuadorian coast, annihilating all who dared oppose him, reserving exceptional wrath for the Cañari. City by city, he massacred every able-bodied Cañari man, soaking the streets in their blood. Word soon spread of his cruelty. One story told of how he rounded up three Cañari chiefs, had their hearts torn out, cut them into tiny pieces and fed them to his men. When he approached Cañari cities, women and children would frantically run towards him carrying green branches of submission in their hands – but to no avail. Atahualpa butchered their men, razed their buildings and tore up their land with such fury that before long people were hurling themselves at his feet pleading for mercy.

However, when he reached the island of La Puná, in the region of Tumbes, straddling northwestern Peru and Ecuador, he found a people fiercely loyal to Huáscar who refused to be intimidated. Now on the rampage, Atahualpa had his men build a fleet of rafts and led an attack on the island, but the islanders played to their strengths, sallying out to meet them on the open sea. There, the La Puná armada dealt Atahualpa a bitter defeat, sending him back to shore with a wounded leg.

Further south, near Huamachuco, Atahualpa consulted a famous oracle and was warned that the god Viracocha was displeased with the extreme levels of cruelty he had unleashed. Atahualpa was apparently so infuriated that he not only ordered the old man be beheaded but also destroyed the adjacent sacred huaca stone and even the hill it stood on. As the stakes grew higher, he decided to delegate command of his military to his generals, Challcuchima and Quizquiz – the finest in the Inca world.

Back in Cusco, Huáscar was continuing to weaken his own position. He was he perceived as a hedonistic, frivolous, cruel fool with neither honour nor courage, and he failed to pay the proper respect to those that had remained loyal to him. As the emperor, he was expected to mingle regularly with the royals, nobles and leading clans at the public plaza's great feasts, but he neglected this duty. To make matters worse, he ejected the traditional clans from the royal bodyguard and instead began to scandalously surround himself with foreign Cañari and Chachapoya warriors. Going a step further, increasingly suspicious of Cusco's elites, he announced plans to strip the panaca (royal clan) of their lands and possessions and even their role in conserving the mummified bodies of dead rulers. This was not just extremely disrespectful, it was sacrilege.

As Atahualpa's army descended the spine of the Andes it clashed with a southern army drawn from various tribes led by his brother Huanca Auqui, who was still loyal to Huáscar. After a series

"Atahualpa butchered their men, razed their buildings and tore up their land"

All images: © Alamy, © Getty Images

of ferocious battles, Challcuchima and Quizquiz pushed Huanca back south before overwhelming and wiping out his army. Seemingly unstoppable, Atahualpa's forces bulldozed their way towards Cusco, where Huáscar pulled together one last army from the remnants of his principal provinces (as far as Chile) and finally took charge himself. Emboldened by a major victory at Cotapampa, where the northern army suffered severe losses, as Challcuchima and Quizquiz approached Cusco, Huáscar boldly decided to bring his army outside into open-field combat. However, his strategy was so poorly conceived that Atahualpa's generals ended up outmanoeuvring and capturing him.

Huáscar was dragged through the city in shame – arms bound, dripping with blood, his clothes torn to shreds. His tunic was ripped from his body and replaced with a bloody rag pulled from one of his dead foreign soldiers. Meanwhile, his golden axe and helmet were sent north to Atahualpa, along with the royal insignia.

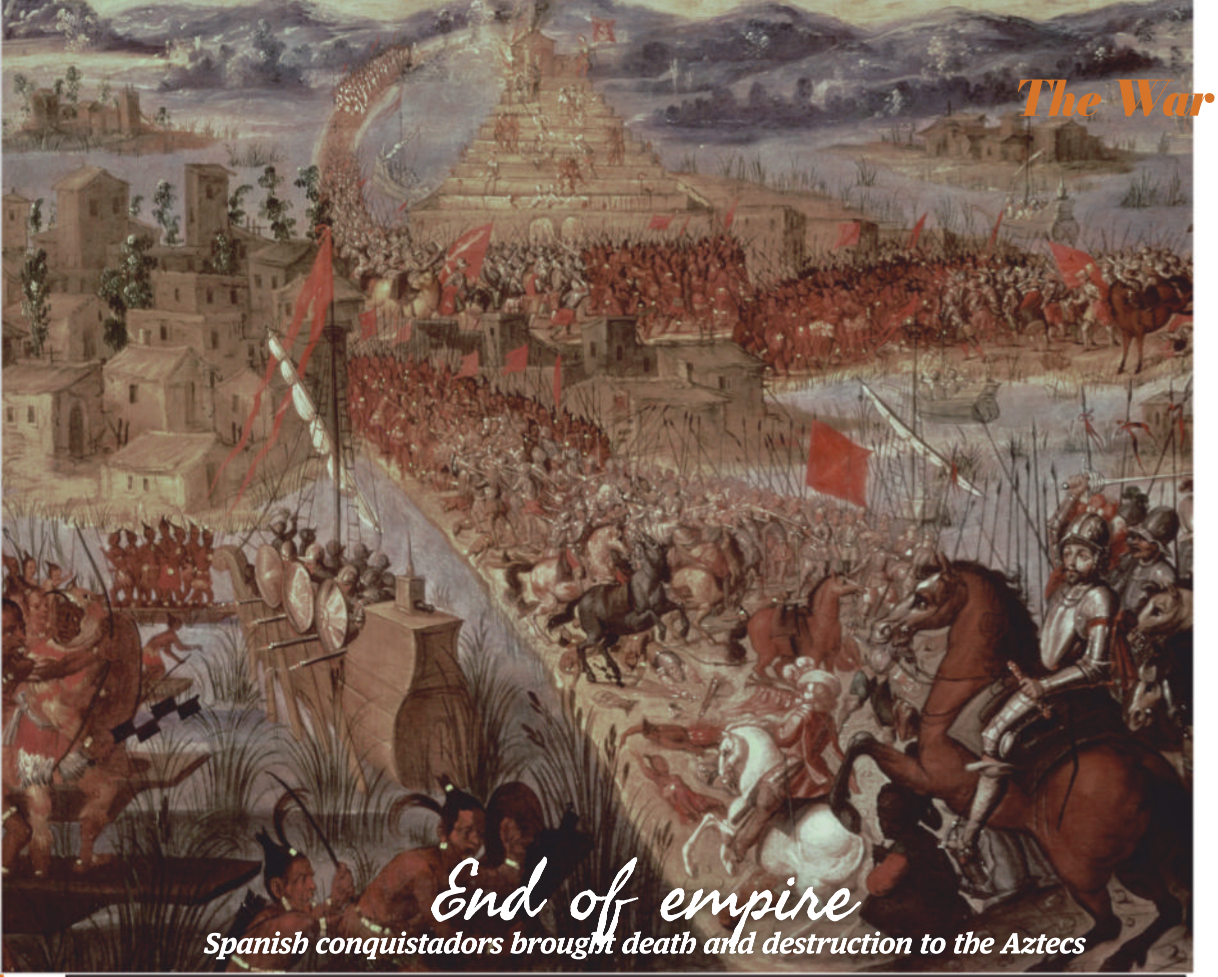
Atahualpa's men were unspeakably brutal in victory. As they marched through the capital, they rounded up Huáscar's many wives and 80 children and forced him to watch as they were whipped and tortured before being clubbed to death and mutilated. In an act of unprecedented desecration, Atahualpa's men even disinterred and burned the mummy of his grandfather Topa Inca, whose house had supported Huáscar's claim to the throne.

Within five days news of the victory reached Atahualpa via his network of 300 relay runners. In the meantime, his men continued massacring Huáscar's supporters, including the Cañari, all across the empire. Huáscar himself was paraded north to Atahualpa, who relished his crushing victory. As far as he was concerned, Huáscar had brought his defeat upon himself. Adding insult to injury, he had his wretched brother fed a diet of human and dog faeces and llama urine.

After five years of indiscriminate bloodletting, in 1532 Atahualpa finally began preparing for his coronation ceremony in Cusco. Now the realm had been reunited, he could turn his attention to expanding it, becoming the fourth successive great Inca conqueror. However, while it seemed to Atahualpa that the Sun was beginning to rise once again over the Inca Empire, in fact it had already begun to set for the last time. The civil war had exhausted the empire just when it would need all its strength.

As the emperor made his way south, reports began to trickle in of bizarre foreigners with hairy faces marching through the Andes on large, fantastical beasts. Wielding magical exploding sticks, they were seen torturing and murdering some provincial chieftains. These were the Spanish conquistadors, invaders from across the endless ocean who had already torn down the mighty Aztec Empire of Mesoamerica. They'd also brought over the disease that had killed Huayna Cápac: smallpox.

Unaware of these events, Atahualpa, victorious warrior king and ruler of all the Inca, took a sip from the gilded skull of Atoc and laughed to himself. Let these fools wander for a while. What harm could they possibly inflict upon the greatest empire under the Sun? ○



End of empire

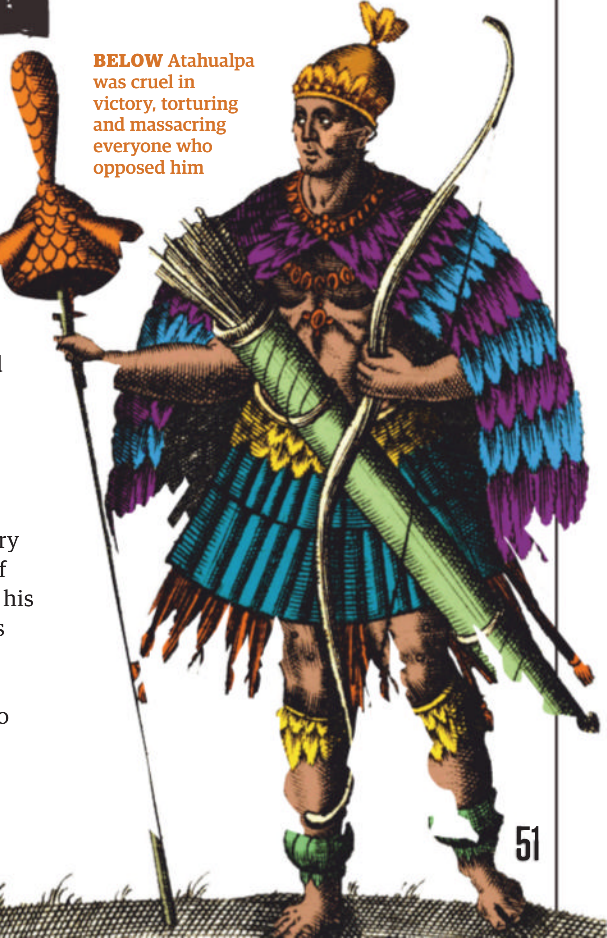
Spanish conquistadors brought death and destruction to the Aztecs

After finishing his conquest of Ecuador, Huayna Cápac began receiving reports of a dreadful new plague that caused rashes to break out across people's bodies before killing them. The affliction, which would soon take the emperor's own life, was smallpox, one of many diseases that had accompanied Christopher Columbus on his second voyage to the Caribbean in 1494.

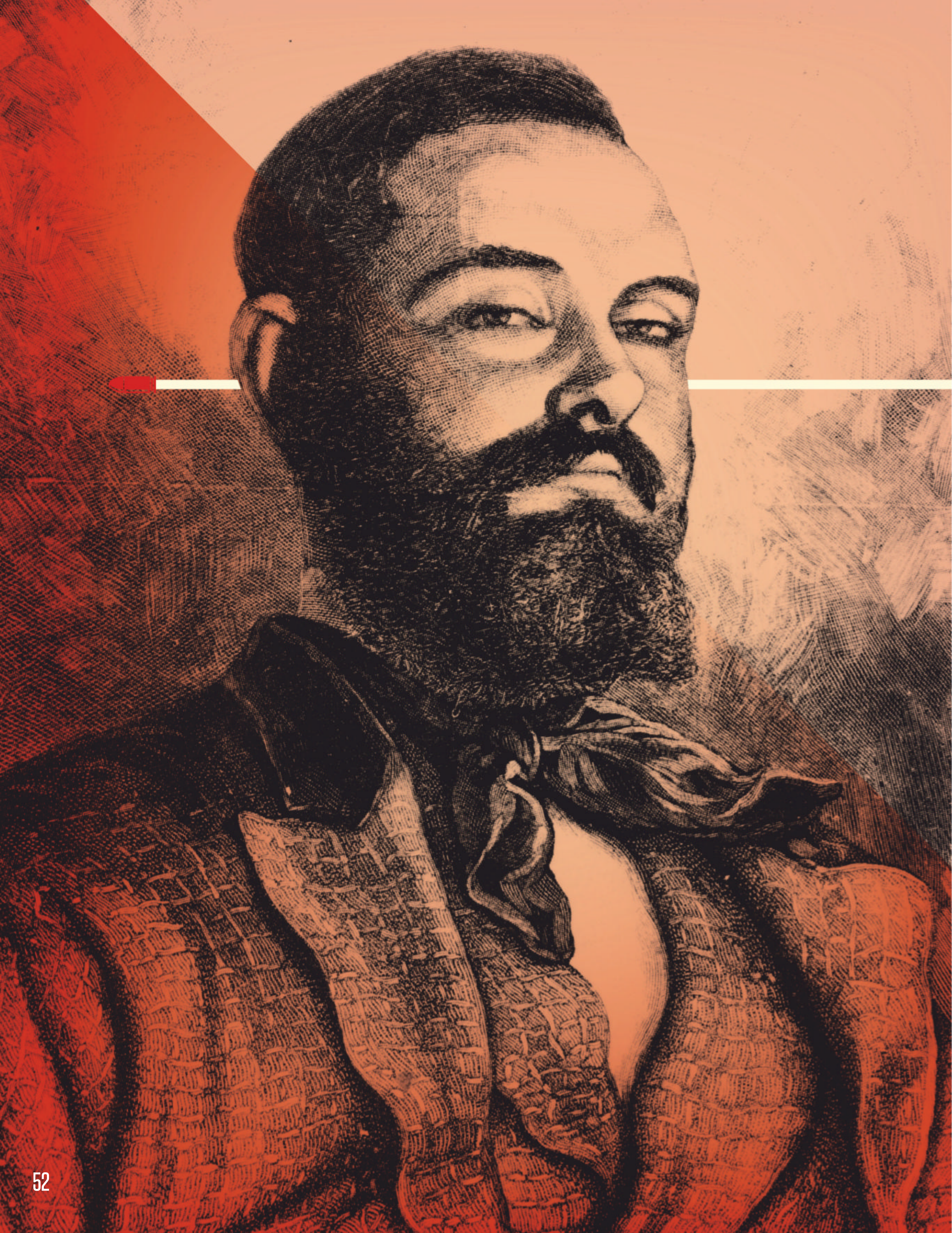
When the notorious conquistador Hernán Cortés began his conquest of the Aztecs in 1519 he carried smallpox with him, a disease that would wipe out 700,000 people in just two years. In the years preceding his arrival the Aztec Empire had witnessed a series of omens predicting the end of the world. The Aztec Emperor Moctezuma II was so mystified by the bizarre visitors that he initially mistook Cortés as a god and welcomed him.

But when the Spaniards tried to enforce their religion on the Aztec people tensions boiled over, culminating in the massacre of several Aztec nobles and priests by the conquistadors and their local allies, the Tlaxcalans. In the ensuing chaos Moctezuma was killed alongside 1,000 conquistadors, and Cortés himself barely escaped the city with his life.

Despite being vastly outnumbered, the conquistadors scored a decisive victory at the Battle of Otumba, where Cortés led a suicidal cavalry charge, killing the new Aztec emperor and sending the Aztecs fleeing. After a brief respite the conquistadors launched an 80-day siege of the Aztec capital with 150,000 local auxiliaries, eventually destroying the city. In the aftermath, they tore down pyramids and temples across the empire, building convents and monasteries on their foundations.



BELOW Atahualpa was cruel in victory, torturing and massacring everyone who opposed him



JESSE JAMES
AMERICA'S ORIGINAL GANGSTER

Fearless outlaw and Confederate guerrilla, Jesse James was a political icon until the ultimate betrayal brought about his assassination

Written by Tanita Matthews

Jesse Woodson James was born in Clay County, Missouri, on 5 September 1847, to Zerelda Elizabeth Cole and Robert James, a preacher and hemp farmer. The middle child of three, born to his Kentucky-native parents, he grew up in a small three-bedroom cabin in 'Little Dixie', an area in Western Missouri now known as Clay County. The vast plains on the Missouri River provided ample economic prospects for hemp and tobacco farmers selling supplies to passing merchants, who funnelled into the region to seek cotton farms and workers. Robert James was also a respected preacher at New Hope Baptist Church, and founded William Jewell College in Liberty, Missouri, in 1849. The family kept six slaves – five young children aged two to 11 and a woman aged 30.

The 1850 Gold Rush drew many fortune-seekers out west, including Robert, who left his family for California in April 1850. He died in August of cholera, leaving Zerelda ▶

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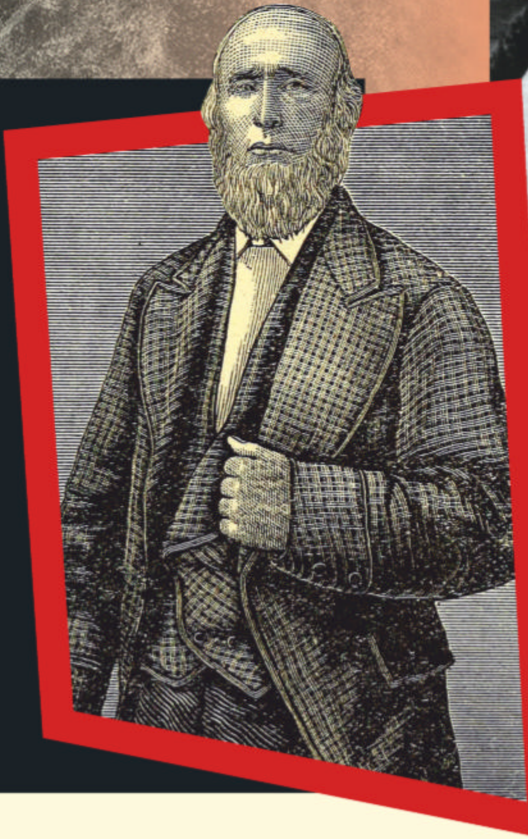
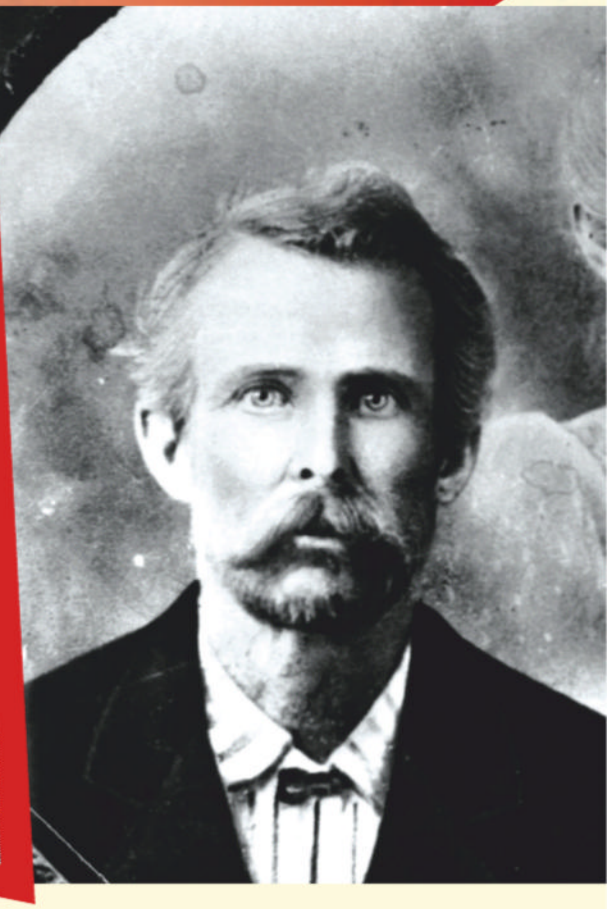
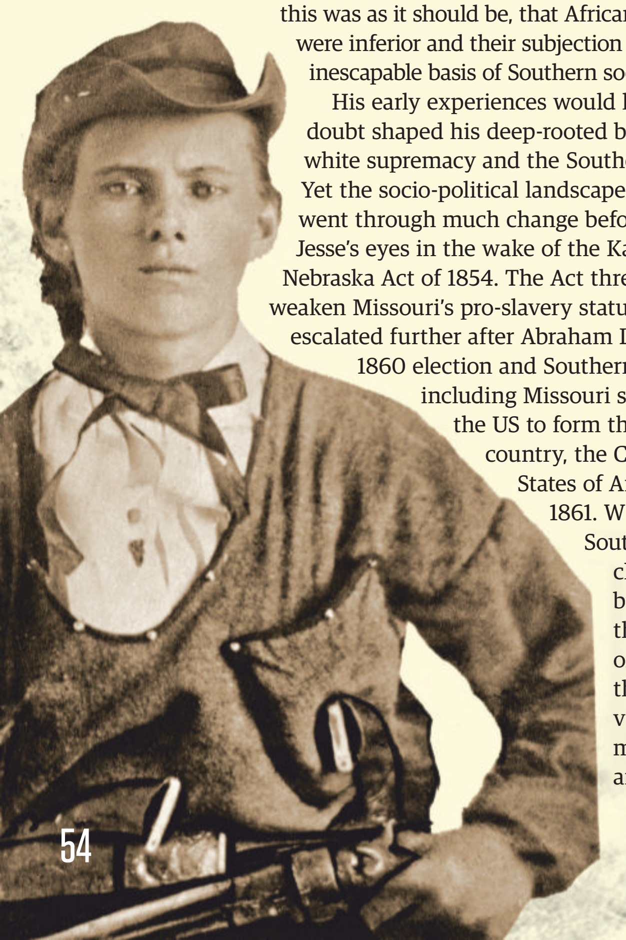
A SECRET SIBLING?

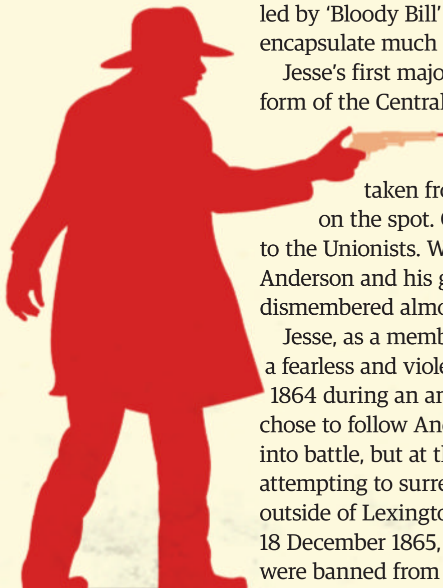
Records indicate that the James brothers' stepfather may have fathered a child with a slave

According to official records, Dr Reuben Samuel may have fathered a child outside of his marriage to Zerelda. Handwritten census records of the James-Samuel household from the late 1800s show a young boy, by the name of Perry Samuel, born three years after the end of the Civil War. His mother is listed as Charlotte Samuel, the eldest of the family's slaves, and his race is listed as "MU", an abbreviation meaning 'mulatto', a term used at the time to indicate a person of mixed race. If Perry's father was indeed the man who enslaved his mother, it would make him a step-brother to the James brothers.









widowed at 25 with three young children and a precarious hold on their farm. Zerelda re-married in September 1852 to Benjamin Simms, a wealthy farmer twice her age who owned lands in Clay County, but the pair separated in 1853. Simms subsequently died in early 1854. On 12 September 1855 Zerelda married a timid country doctor, Dr Reuben Samuel. Together they would have four children together: Sarah Louisa, John Thomas, Fannie Quantrell and Archie Peyton Samuel.

Historian and author TJ Stiles in his book *Jesse James: Last Rebel of the Civil War* notes that Jesse James' upbringing in a pro-slavery household meant that "he learned from infancy that all this was as it should be, that African Americans were inferior and their subjection was the inescapable basis of Southern society".

His early experiences would have no doubt shaped his deep-rooted belief in white supremacy and the Southern cause. Yet the socio-political landscape of Missouri went through much change before young Jesse's eyes in the wake of the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854. The Act threatened to weaken Missouri's pro-slavery status. Tensions escalated further after Abraham Lincoln's 1860 election and Southern states including Missouri seceded the US to form their own country, the Confederate States of America, in 1861. While the Southern states claimed to be protecting their way of life, the North viewed this move as an act of rebellion leading to violence on the Missouri-Kansas border. When Confederate troops attacked Fort Sumter in South Carolina on 12 April 1861, the Civil War officially began.

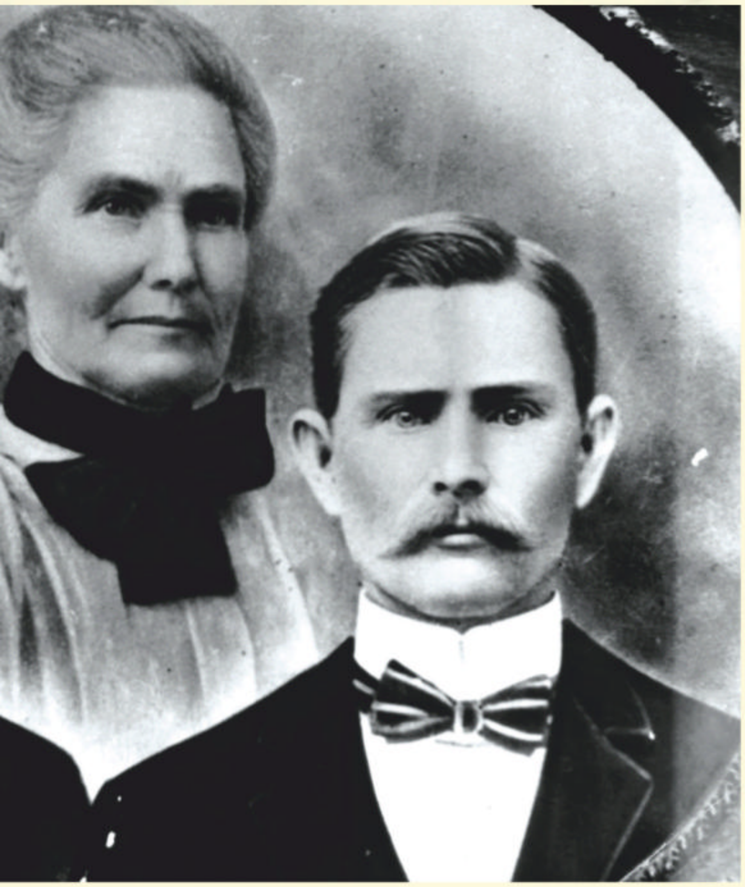
Jesse's formative years would have been spent witnessing the guerrilla warfare that gripped Missouri. Secessionist 'bushwhackers' fought with Union forces, which largely consisted of local militias known as 'jayhawkers'. Jesse's older brother Frank joined pro-Confederate guerillas, following the command of William Clarke Quantrill. One evening the opposition, looking for information on Frank's whereabouts, attacked and tortured Jesse's stepfather. Jesse, a young boy at the time, is also alleged to have been assaulted in the attack. In the spring of 1864, 16-year-old Jesse, following in his brother's footsteps, joined a guerrilla group led by 'Bloody Bill' Anderson. It would be a decision that would encapsulate much of his life and legacy.

Jesse's first major test as a Confederate soldier came in the form of the Centralia Massacre on 27 September 1864. Reports state that 22 unarmed Union soldiers were taken from a train by Anderson's group and executed on the spot. One teenager was spared, who took word back to the Unionists. When 150 men on horseback tried to attack, Anderson and his group were ready and slaughtered, scalped and dismembered almost every soldier. Few survived.

Jesse, as a member of Anderson's group, earned a reputation as a fearless and violent warrior. Anderson was shot dead in October 1864 during an ambush by pro-Unionist guerilla soldiers. Jesse chose to follow Anderson's lieutenant, Archie Clement, back into battle, but at the age of 17 he was shot in the chest while attempting to surrender following a run-in with a Union patrol outside of Lexington. While he recovered, the Civil War ended on 18 December 1865, officially abolishing slavery. Ex-Confederates were banned from voting, holding office or working as teachers or preachers unless they swore loyalty to the Union.

> "JESSE, AS A MEMBER OF ANDERSON'S GROUP, EARNED A REPUTATION AS A FEARLESS AND VIOLENT WARRIOR"

LEFT Jesse James' legacy is one controversy and mixed ideals: outlaw, freedom fighter, murderer and much-loved son



LEFT Zerelda James supported her sons Frank and Jesse tirelessly throughout their days as outlaws, telling people "no mother ever had better sons"

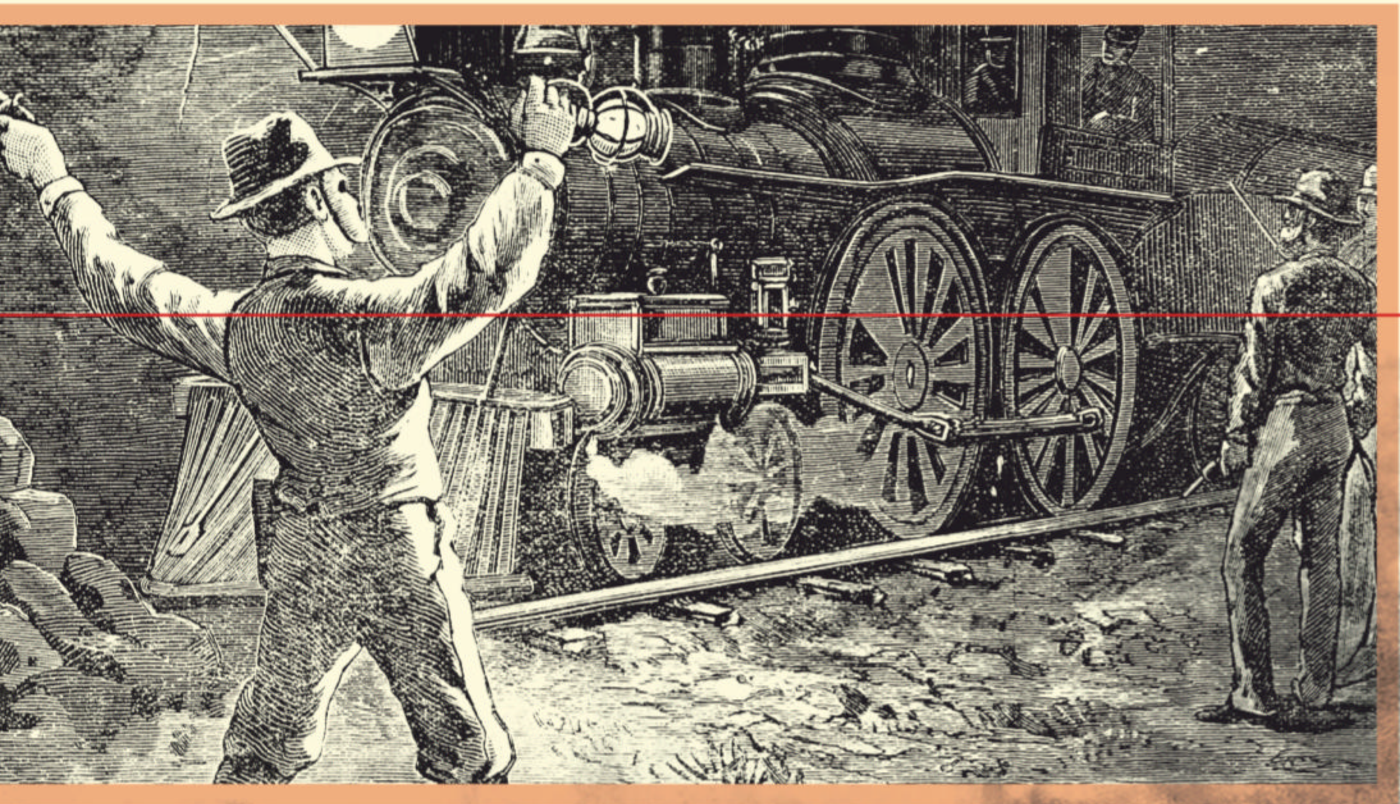
CONFEDERATE. OUTLAW. TERRORIST?

While the United States tried to move towards a more equal and harmonious landscape, racism was still rife. Confederate guerilla soldiers such as Clement refused to relent and continued to apply pressure on and intimidate Republican officials and former Union leaders. Clement's gang targeted banks, robbing those who had supported the Union during the war and killing people who patronised their business. It is unclear how many of these bank robberies were committed with Jesse, as his recovery was a long, drawn-out process.

On 13 February 1866 Clement's group targeted the Clay County Savings Association in the town of Liberty, Missouri, owned by Republican former militia officers. The group made off with $60,000 (worth almost $2 million in today's money) in cash and bonds. A young, innocent teenager was the only casualty of the heist. It is unclear if Frank and Jesse were a part of this particular attack; some have argued that Jesse was still bedbound, recovering from his injuries, however newspapers reported that the James brothers were believed to have been connected after "a very fine mare" was left at the scene of the crime and "was identified as belonging to them".

That same summer Clement's gang targeted the Jackson County (Missouri) Jail for a prisoner break in June 1866. Reportedly a group of "six or seven men" released two jailed members of Quantrill's gang. The *St Louis Globe-Democrat* reported: "The Bushwackers were beaten off; but Henry Bulger, the Deputy Sheriff and Jailor, was instantly killed and his little boy was dangerously injured." Paying tribute to Bulgar, the Missouri Mayor declared: "Last night, fiends in the human form, with murder, destruction and intent to wrest a fellow fiend from the power of the law in their hearts, rode into our city and spread panic and dread to every heart that was human and whereas they murdered in cold blood."

In late 1866, Clement was shot dead by state militia, yet his men continued to conduct bank robberies and lynch Northern sympathisers. Jesse rose to infamy in December 1869 following the robbery of the Davies County Savings Association in Gallatin, Missouri. Jesse, accompanied by Frank and eight other men, shot and killed the cashier, Captain John Sheets, mistakenly believing him to be the militia officer who had killed his friend and mentor Anderson during the Civil War. The *Missouri Republican* newspaper on 17 December 1869 reported that Jesse "was implicated in the bank robbery at Richmond Missouri in 1866 and ever since the war has been regarded as a desperate and dangerous character". Jesse was launched into widespread notoriety and branded an outlaw, and Missouri Governor Thomas ▶



LEFT Jesse James and his gang are believed to have committed more than 20 bank and train robberies between 1860 and 1882

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FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE

Six decades after Jesse James' death, speculation arose that he had survived Robert Ford's assassination

In May 1948, a man who went by the name of J Frank Dalton claimed his real name to be Jesse James. He alleged that the man Robert Ford had murdered in 1882 was actually a house guest. Dalton, 101 years old at the time of his grand reveal, died on 15 August 1951 in Granbury, Texas. Sheriff Oran Baker positively identified the dead man as Jesse James, and he was buried in Granbury Cemetery with a headstone bearing the name Jesse Woodson James. But DNA testing in 1995 proved the that man slain by Ford really was Jesse James, while DNA testing on the imposter named him as William Henry Holland.

T Crittenden set a reward of $5,000 for the capture of each rebel associated with the train robberies and murders.

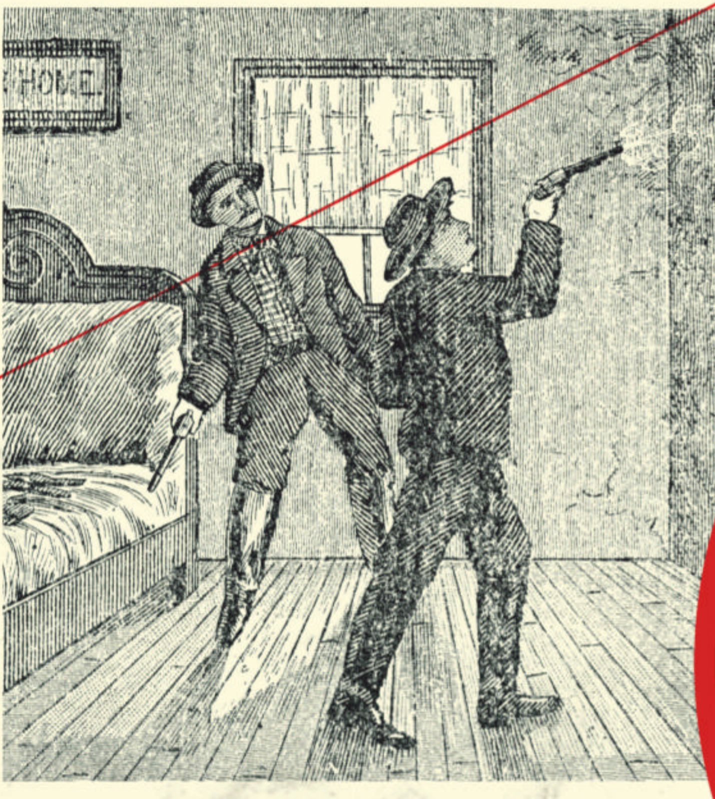
Jesse struck up an alliance of sorts with the editor and founder of the *Kansas City Times*, John Newman Edwards, a cavalryman for the Confederate Army during the war. Edwards' stories on Jesse were somewhat sympathetic to his plight; their alliance allowed the young outlaw to paint himself in the image of a Nationalist 'Robin Hood' and spread loyal Confederate propaganda. Edwards published letters from Jesse in which he declared: "We are not thieves, we are bold robbers. I am proud of the name, for Alexander the Great was a bold robber, and Julius Caesar, and Napoleon Bonaparte." Jesse became a Confederate icon who stood in defiance of the Federal Reconstruction policy. However, there is no evidence that he donated or gave away sums of stolen money.

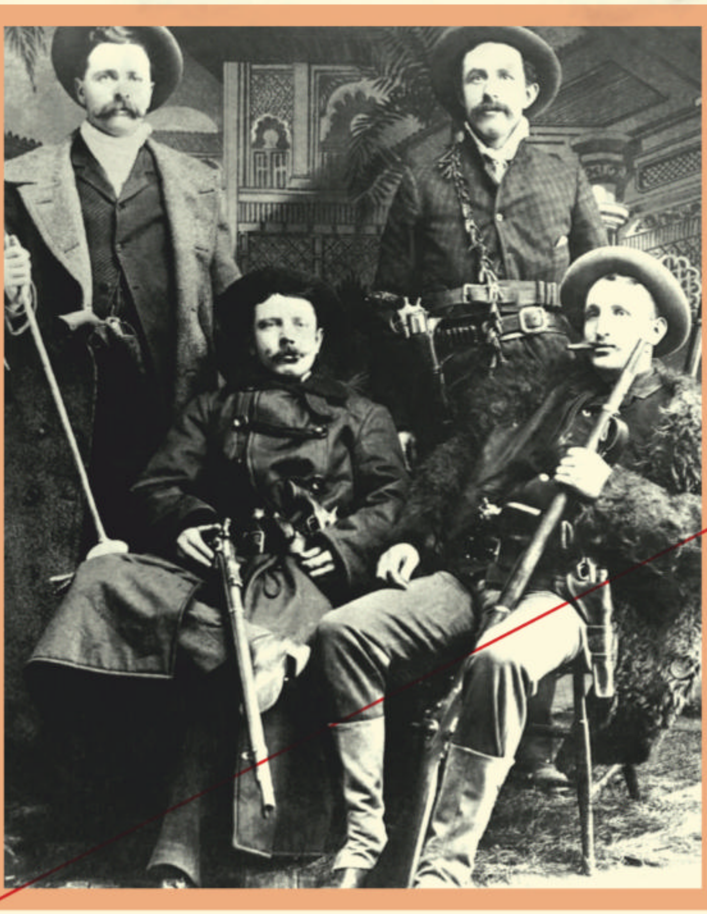
At the height of his notoriety, Jesse and Frank along with Cole Younger formed the James-Younger Gang. Younger, a member of Frank's former Confederate guerrillas led by Quantrill, brought with him members Jim Younger, Bob Younger, Clell Miller, Bill Chadwell and Charlie Pitts. Jesse became the public-facing leader of the gang, which carried out a string of robberies on banks and stagecoaches and trains across the Midwest and Texas.

In July 1873 the gang, donning Ku Klux Klan masks, derailed a Rock Island Line train west of Adair, Iowa, and stole approximately $3,000 (equivalent to $79,000 in 2025). In January 1874, Jesse and Frank, Cole Younger, Jim Younger and John Younger, held up a store in Gads Hill, Missouri, holding the townspeople hostage inside. They then held up a train, robbing passengers and the safe. The day's heist netted them $12,000 (equivalent to $334,000 in 2025) in cash. Throughout 1874 the gang targeted a number of trains and stagecoaches, each time escaping with a large sum of money and their lives. The James brothers often retreated to the family farm to lay low.

The James-Younger Gang's targeting of the trainlines led to a collaborative effort by the Adams Express Company and Pinkerton National Detective Agency to capture and arrest the members. The involvement of the Pinkerton National Detective Agency would turn out to be a huge mistake when the agency founder, Allan Pinkerton, who had been working with Unionists who lived

RIGHT James was shot dead inside his Missouri home by Robert Ford, who'd struck a deal with the Missouri governor





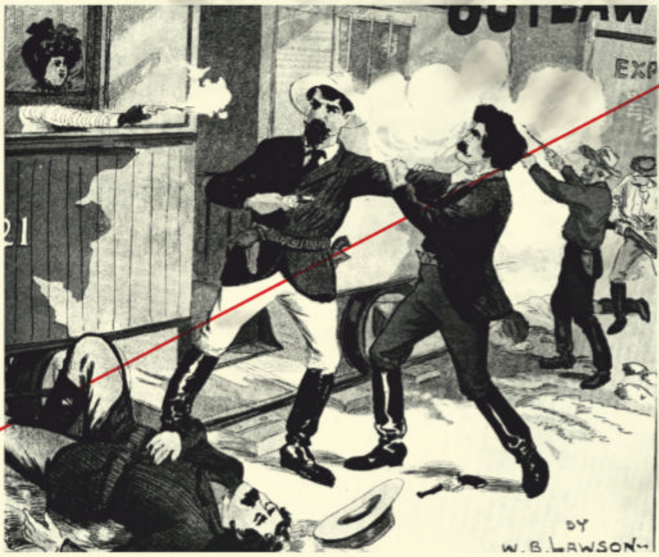
near the James-Samuel farm and local detectives, ordered a raid on the James-Samuel home. Detectives threw a makeshift bomb into the farmhouse and the explosion killed Jesse's eight-year-old half-brother and caused such catastrophic injuries to Zerelda that she lost the lower portion of her right arm.

Outraged by the bounty hunters' actions, ex-Confederates and the local people rallied for the state to offer the James and Younger brothers amnesty – the legislation was only narrowly defeated. However, a bill was passed that ordered the governor's reward for the capture of fugitives be limited so as not to invoke further violence to capture the brothers. In 1875 Jesse and Frank moved their family out to Nashville, Tennessee, to avoid the attention of prying detectives.

THICK AS THIEVES

The number of heists committed by the gang dwindled and in September 1876 the group attempted a bank robbery in an area hundreds of miles outside of their comfort zone that would forever alter their paths. The National Bank of Northfield, Minnesota, which the gang believed to be a bank associated with major names of the Republican party, was set upon by the gang. The robbery was a disaster. At around 2pm Frank, Charlie Pitts and Bob Younger entered the First National Bank while Jesse, Cole, Jim Bill and Quell waited outside. A local man noticed the robbery about to get underway and raised the alarm. Residents of Northfield opened fire against the gang, killing two of the robbers on the spot.

However, the rest of the gang pushed on with the robbery. They assaulted and intimidated the cashier, Joseph Lee Heywood, with knives and pistols before murdering him. Residents hunted down the gang, who had escaped with only $26.70 in spare change. Jesse and Frank escaped back to Missouri. Cole, Jim and Bob Younger as well as Charlie Pitts were ambushed and forced to surrender. Pitts was killed in a shootout, while the surviving Younger brothers were arrested and sent to prison for murder. The James-Younger gang had been mostly obliterated overnight, and Jesse and Frank were forced to hide out in Tennessee under assumed names.



Two years later, Jesse returned to crime and Missouri, having recruited more members for the gang. But he could tell that the new recruits were unlike his former loyal band of murderous men – they were not battle-hardened guerrillas, they were rebels without a cause who would ultimately turn on each other when captured. Jesse became suspicious of the members and their loyalty.

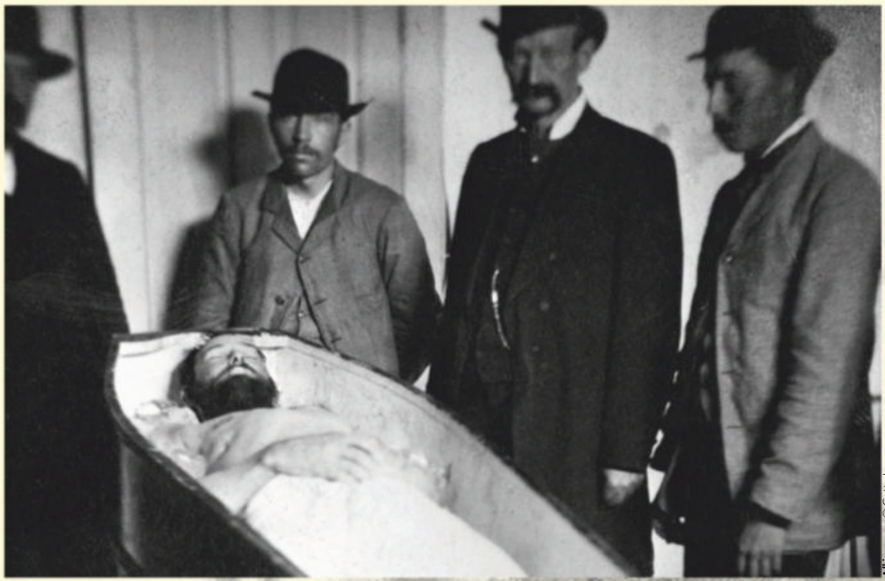
The only two people Jesse trusted were brothers Robert and Charlie Ford. For protection, he asked the Ford brothers to move in with him and his family in St Joseph Missouri, where he was living under the pseudonym of Thomas Howard. Unbeknown to him, Robert Ford had shaken the hand of Governor Thomas T Crittenden on 13 January 1882 and made a deal. It was an arrangement that potentially offered Ford not only his freedom and $10,000, but also lifelong notoriety as the man who brought the nation's most infamous outlaw to his knees. For weeks Robert, along with his brother Charlie, lay in wait for the time to strike. Inside Jesse's modest town house on Clay County's Lafayette Street, Robert pulled his gun and shot Jesse in the back of the head as he straightened a picture on the wall, bringing to a close a violent chapter in Missouri's history.

FAR-LEFT In their years in cahoots, the James-Younger gang stole approximately $200,000 in cash

ABOVE The gang's violent robberies were depicted in lurid detail by newspapers and magazines

BELOW James' body was returned to the Missouri farm where he grew up. He is buried at Mount Olivet Cemetery in Kearney, Missouri

> "JESSE BECAME A CONFEDERATE ICON WHO STOOD IN DEFIANCE OF THE FEDERAL RECONSTRUCTION POLICY"



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SEVERUS

ROME'S AFRICAN EMPEROR

Simon Elliott explains how Rome was reshaped by this all-conquering ruler

Interview by Callum McKelvie

EXPERT BIO

© Dr Simon Elliott

SIMON ELLIOTT

Dr Elliott is an historian, author, broadcaster and archaeologist. He is an expert on the history of Ancient Rome and has written several books on the subject, including *Roman Britain's Missing Legion: What Really Happened to IX Hispana?* and *Septimius Severus in Scotland: The Northern Campaigns of the First Hammer of the Scots.* His new biography, *The African Emperor: The Life of Septimius Severus*, is due out in September 2025.

From 193 to 211 CE, Emperor Septimius Severus ruled the Roman Empire with an iron fist. During his reign he was able to expand the empire, conquering Parthia and parts of Africa, construct architectural marvels and obliterate several would-be usurpers. Born in Leptis Magna in North Africa, Severus seems unusually overlooked compared to other Roman rulers such as Nero and Caesar. Dr Simon Elliott has written a new biography of Severus, due to be published later in the year, and we spoke to him to find out about the achievements and legacy of the 'African Emperor'.

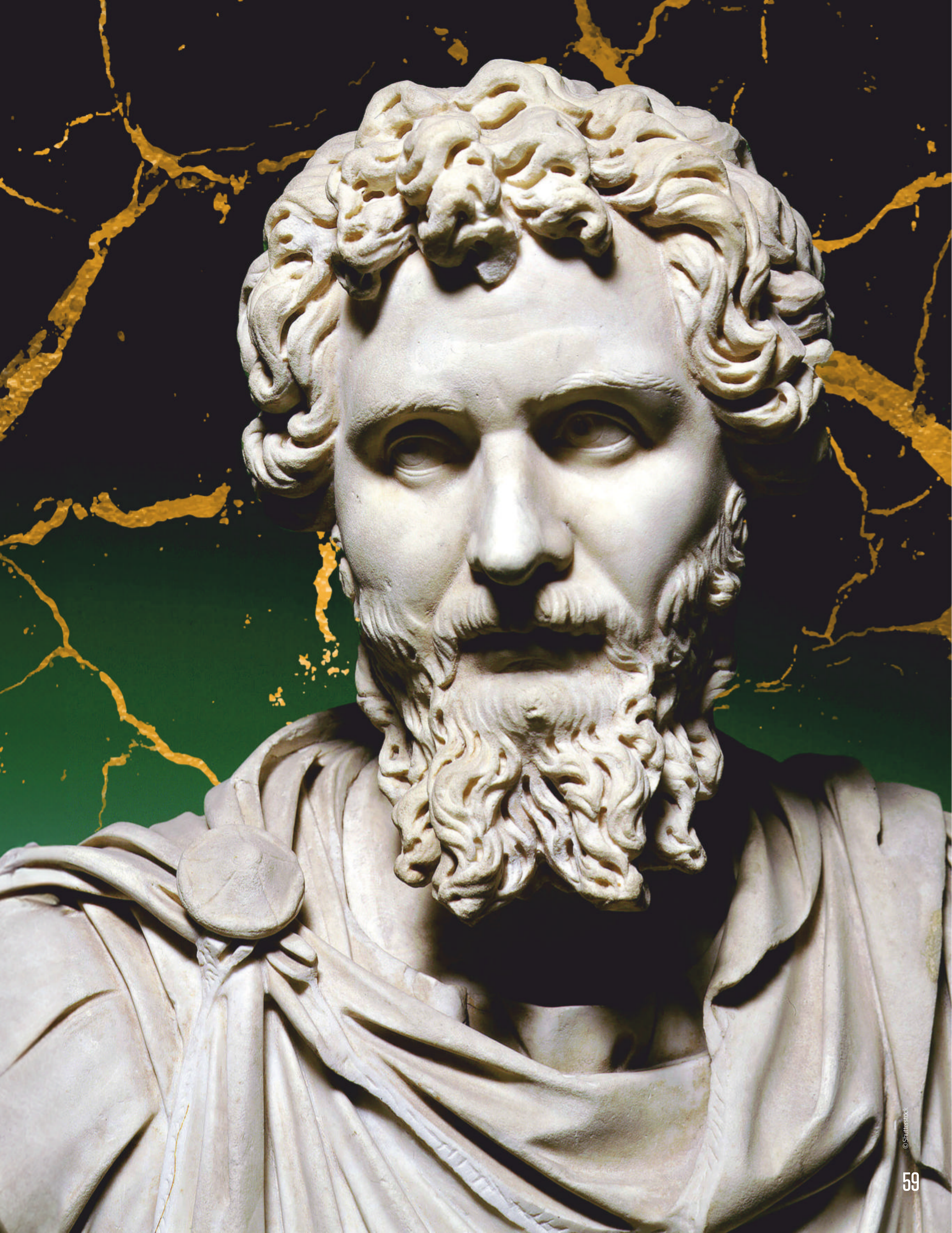
Tell us about Rome prior to Severus becoming emperor?

Severus became emperor in 193 CE when Rome was at the height of the Principate, which lasted from 27 BC to 284 CE. In effect, this was the first half of the Roman Empire. Commodus, portrayed excellently by Joaquin Phoenix in *Gladiator* [Ridley Scott's film from 2000], was the emperor at the end of 192 CE but was assassinated on New Year's Eve. Personally, I think Commodus was one of the worst, if not the worst, Roman emperor.

Where was Severus' birthplace?

Severus was born in 145 CE in Leptis Magna in North Africa, which at the time was a fully functioning part of the Roman Empire, even more so than Northern Europe. The core of the Roman Empire was the Mediterranean and I would argue that North Africa was more a part of the empire than Britannia or any of the Gallic provinces.

▶



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Severus is known as the 'African Emperor', what can you tell us about his origins?

His great grandfather was called Septimius Macer, which is a Carthaginian-Phoenician name, while his mother was Italian. Severus was notably dark-skinned – not unusual in what was a very multicultural empire. To the Romans, if you had money, you were able to travel around the Roman Empire and be a free citizen. Being Roman was not based on skin colour, it was about whether you were born within the borders of the empire, paid your taxes and tipped your hat to the imperial cult.

What can you tell us about Severus' life before he became emperor?

He was born in April 145 CE to one of the richest families in one of the richest parts of the Roman world. He was sent to Rome and received the best education that money could buy. Interestingly, he was noted for keeping his rather guttural Carthaginian-Punic accent, even though he probably could have quite easily adopted a Latin accent. But he purposefully remained true to his North African roots. He then began his military career, with his first key position commanding Legio III Cyrenaica fighting the Persians in Syria. Eventually he became the governor of Gallia Lugdunensis, an incredibly affluent strip of land running through the centre of Gaul. His provincial capital was at Lugdunum, modern Lyon, where he married his second wife, and the love of his life, Julia Domna. He then held various positions in Rome before becoming the governor of Pannonia Superior on the upper Danube. This was a key province controlling access from north of the Danube into northeastern Italy. A really important province

How did Severus become emperor?

Severus was still the governor of Pannonia Superior in the build-up to Commodus' assassination on New Year's Eve, 192 CE. Commodus was replaced immediately by a senior Roman nobleman called Pertinax, at the time the prefect of Rome. He had actually been Severus' mentor, but he was killed by the Praetorian Guard three months later in March 193 CE. Following his demise there were a number of players waiting in the wings to make a play for the imperial throne. Alongside Severus the main two candidates were Clodius Albinus, governor in Britain; and Pescennius Niger, governor in Syria. Of these, Severus was the one who was closest. Although Albinus and Niger both declared themselves the new emperor, Severus was able to quickly march from the Danube to Rome, enter the Senate House and declare himself the new emperor. The Senators had no choice but to accept this. He then disbanded the Praetorian Guard, which had been responsible for Pertinax's death, and reformed it at twice the strength (10,000 men) made up from his own Danubian veterans. He then fought two civil wars. First, he defeated Niger in the east in 194 CE, and then Albinus at the titanic Battle of Lugdunum in 197 CE. He was now unchallenged as the emperor.

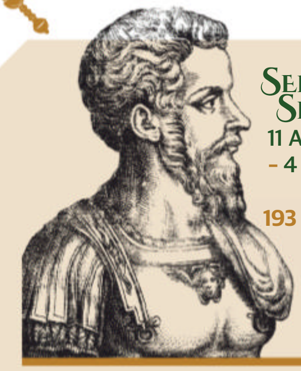
What sort of an emperor was he?

Severus was the ultimate tough guy. At heart he was a military man who focused on two things: his family and on the army. Severus spent nearly all his reign campaigning. In fact, upon defeating Niger he was actually annoyed that Albinus forced him to travel back to Gaul for the Battle of Lugdunum. At that point Severus was intending to invade Parthia. He wanted to be one of the few Roman leaders who successfully invaded Parthia, but

BELOW The ruins of Leptis Magna, the birthplace of Septimius Severus in modern Libya

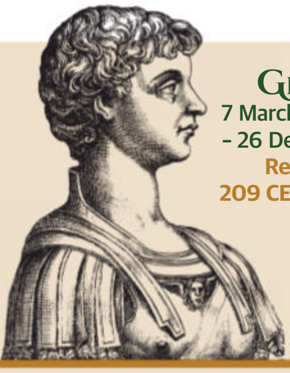
THE SEVERIN EMPERORS

A number of successors followed Severus' reign



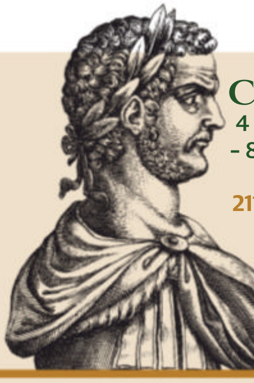
SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS
11 April 145 CE
– 4 Feb 211 CE
Reign:
193 CE – 211 CE

Septimius Severus became emperor in 193 CE and passed away in 211 CE. His dynasty was short, the entire line having come to an end just two decades later.



GETA
7 March 189 CE
– 26 Dec 211 CE
Reign:
209 CE – 211 CE

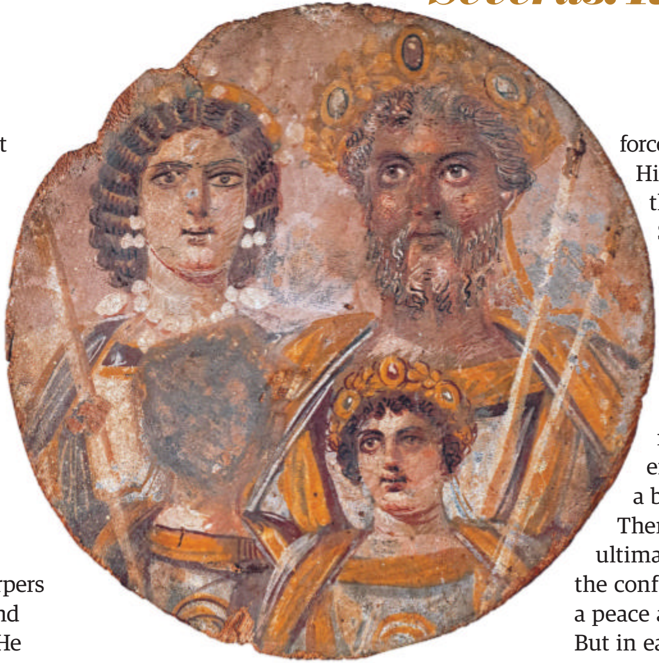
Geta ruled jointly alongside Severus and Caracalla. He was assassinated on the orders of his brother by the Praetorian Guard.



CARACALLA
4 April 188 CE
– 8 April 217 CE
Reign:
211 CE – 217 CE

Caracalla became sole emperor after the assassination of his brother. His reign was problematic and he was known for his cruelty.

instead he had to go back to defeat this usurper. He did eventually conquered Parthia at the end of the second century CE. He was one of the greatest conquering Roman emperors. His main monument to himself was the arch of Septimius Severus at the head of the Forum Romanum, which celebrated his victory over the Parthians. It was built partly on the foundations of the Senate House as a reminder to the Senators that Severus was the boss. There were many Senators who had supported the other usurpers but Severus had them executed and appropriated their family wealth. He had more legions than any other Roman emperor and, because of his continual campaigning, expanded the frontiers of the empire to a greater extent than any other Roman emperor. He was a tough guy and he proved himself a tough guy at every opportunity.



LEFT Family portrait of Severus (top-right), his wife Julia Domna (top-left) and their two sons Caracalla (bottom-right) and Geta (bottom-left). Geta's face has been removed, likely due to his memory being condemned

Why did Severus launch a campaign in Britain in 209 CE and 210 CE?

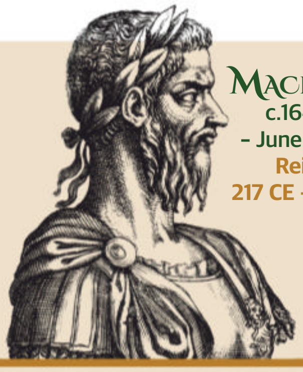
Why did Severus go to Britain? Ambition. He wanted to be better than the great Augustus. Caesar might be the most famous Roman to us today, but to the Romans the greatest Roman was Augustus. Augustus was never able to conquer the Parthians and the Britons. Severus, on the other hand, had already defeated the Parthians. The one thing he had left to achieve was to conquer the far north of Britain. In 207 CE he received a letter from the governor of Britain, Senecio, asking for help because the entire province was in danger of being overrun. It was clearly some kind of over-exaggeration, and some think it might actually have been a set-up by Severus to give himself an excuse to launch his campaign. He arrived in Britain in 208 CE and brought the imperial family with him, together with the imperial treasury, part of the Senate and the Praetorian Guard. So from 208-211 CE, York was the imperial capital of the whole empire. He then mustered a force of 50,000, the largest campaigning force on British soil. This is a man of superlatives, the most powerful African who ever lived. He's got the Roman Empire with more legions than anybody else, he's got the Roman borders bigger than anybody else, and he's now got the biggest campaigning force ever on British soil.

> "THE MOST POWERFUL ROMAN EMPEROR CONTINUES TO HIDE IN PLAIN SIGHT"

How successful were these campaigns?

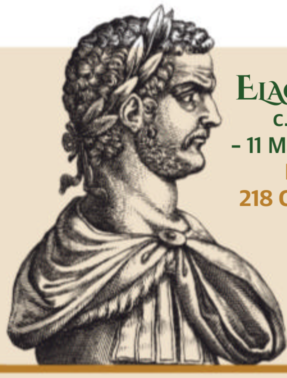
He launched the first campaign in 209 CE with his son, Caracalla. The whole force marched its way up to the Highland Line, essentially isolating the whole of the lowlands of Scotland, with the Roman Classis Britannica fleet sealing off the coast. At that point it became an incredibly difficult campaign for all concerned, including Severus. The weather was bad and the natives, rather than fight a major engagement, instead conducted a brutal guerrilla campaign. There were lots of casualties but ultimately the sheer numbers pushed the conflict in Severus' favour, with a peace agreed by the end of 209 CE. But in early 210 CE the native Britons realised the Romans weren't going home, so they rebelled. Severus effectively declared a genocide. The second campaign was almost an exact recreation of the first, except this time it was led by Caracalla because Severus had already begun to become ill. The other difference from the first campaigns is that this time they massacred everyone they could. There is evidence for this in the archeological record as it proves that a major depopulation event happened from this time all the way through towards the end of the third century CE. ▶

BELOW A bust of Julia Domna



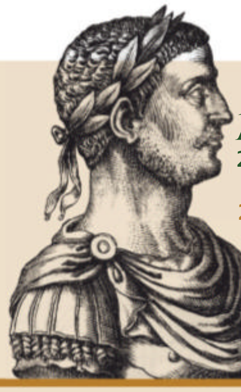
MACRINUS
c.164 CE
– June 218 CE
Reign:
217 CE – 218 CE

Macrinus ruled for just one year. He was overthrown by Elagabalus and, after evading capture, was eventually caught and executed.



ELAGABALUS
c.203 CE
– 11 March 222 CE
Reign:
218 CE – 222 CE

Elagabalus was the penultimate emperor of the Severin dynasty. He was the nephew of Severus and historians theorise that he may have been trans.



SEVERUS ALEXANDER
209 CE – 235 CE
Reign:
222 CE – 235 CE

He was the favoured choice as emperor following the reign of Elagabalus. His reign is suspected to have largely been controlled by his mother.

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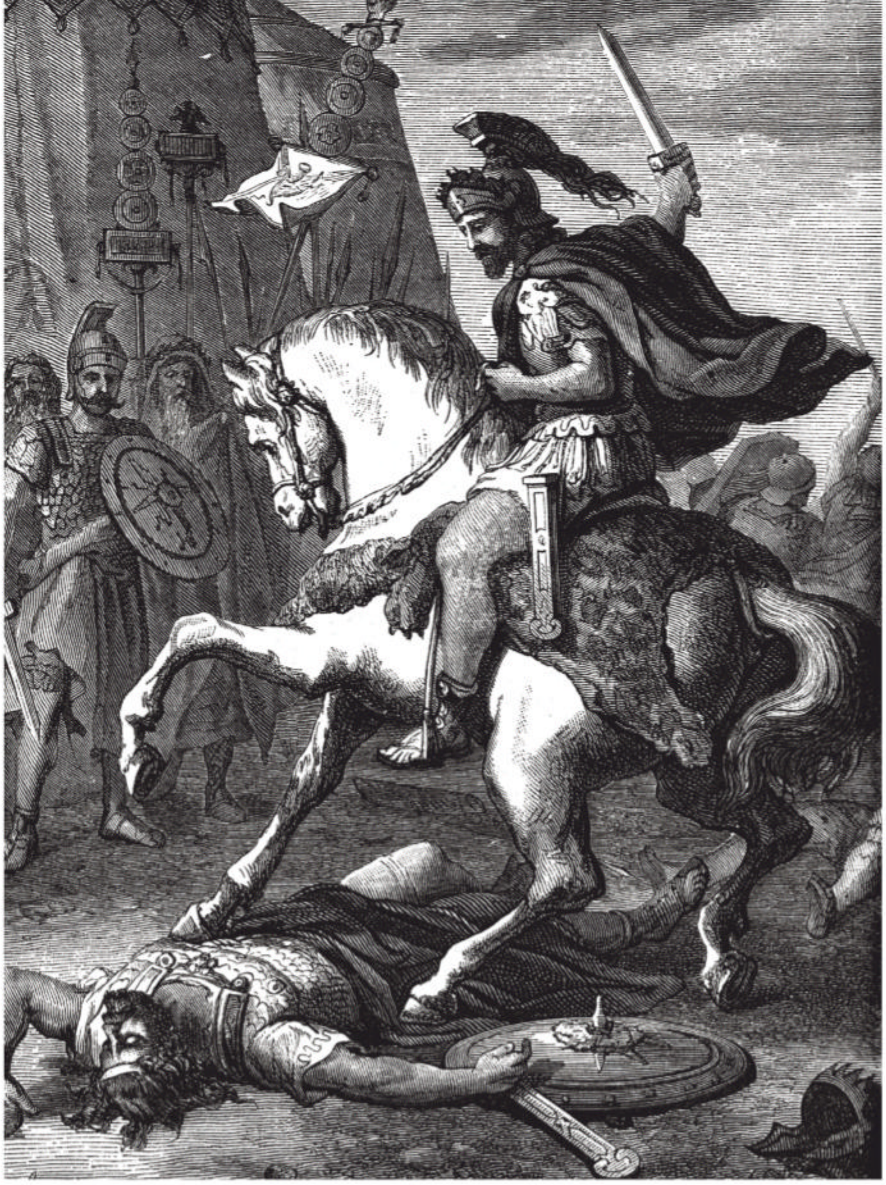

RIGHT Severus, victorious over the body of his rival Albinus after defeating him at the Battle of Lugdunum

How did Severus die?

He died in February 211 CE in York in the freezing cold of a British winter, suffering from acute 'circulatory disease'. This is often referred to as having been gout but it really could have been anything.

Following Severus' demise, what can you tell us about the lasting legacy of his lineage?

When Severus dies, he asks his sons, Caracalla and Geta, to rule jointly. But the problem is they hate each other – I mean absolutely loathe one another! As soon as Severus was dead Caracalla and Geta raced each other back to Rome but they proved completely unfit to rule. In 211 CE Caracalla had Geta assassinated, he died bleeding to death in their mother Julia Domna's arms. Caracalla turned out to be just as maniacal an emperor as Commodus, although admittedly he was a much better military leader. But in 217 CE he himself was assassinated while campaigning in the east. He was stabbed by one of his soldiers while he was urinating against a tree. Macrinus, who was the Praetorian Prefect, took over briefly, but the Severan family quickly eliminated him. He was replaced by Elagabalus, Severus' nephew through Julia Domna's sister. Elagabalus was also killed and replaced by Alexander Severus, another nephew. His death in 235 CE marked the end of the Severan dynasty and the Roman Empire almost imploded through economic strife, civil war and even plague in what we call today the 'Crisis of the Third Century'.

What was Severus' impact on Rome?

If you travel around Rome today, about one-third of the ancient Roman environment you see was constructed by the Severin dynasty. Many people don't realise that. Some of the most famous sites associated with him include the arch of Septimius Severus, which is in the Forum Romanum. Here you can also see the Temple of Vesta, where the famous vestal virgins worshiped, rebuilt by Julia Domna. Then atop the Palatine Hill much of the imperial palace is Severan, as is the Temple of Elagabalus next to it. Meanwhile, the top tier of the Colosseum was rebuilt by Severus following a fire, while the enormous Baths of Caracalla are Severan. His impact on Rome is hiding in plain sight, even today in the recent *Gladiator II* film where the villains are Caracalla and Geta – Severus' sons.

Why is Severus lesser-known today than other Roman emperors?

One of the issues with Severus is that there is almost too much story to tell. My upcoming biography *The African Emperor* (through Icon Books and Bolinda Audio) is about 100,000 words long and even then I had to be very, very concise in writing it because it's such a big story to tell. You can almost get consumed by him and his achievements. But it is interesting we have this emperor, who's clearly an African emperor, who remains somewhat unknown. Everybody talks about Hadrian or Caesar and yet the most powerful Roman emperor continues to hide in plain sight. ○

BELOW Caracalla, Severus' son who became emperor after he assassinated his brother Geta on 26 December 211 CE

BELOW-RIGHT The Arch of Septimius Severus at the Roman Forum is just one example of Severin architecture

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A group of women take to the streets of the capital to show their support for the Republic, 1937

Greatest Battles

SEIGE OF MADRID

MADRID, SPAIN
8 NOVEMBER 1936 – 28 MARCH 1939

Written by Louis Hardiman

July 1936, and chaos reigned in the streets of Madrid. The Republican government, for so long attempting to avoid open war, was on the verge of destruction at the hands of Francisco Franco's military coup. Fighting had broken out in major cities across the country, and for a moment it seemed as though the capital would fall to the rebels. Instead, it held out until the spring of 1939 thanks to popular resistance. Communists, democrats and anarchists united against the Francoists, rallying around Dolores Ibarruri's famous radio broadcast "¡No pasarán!" ("They shall not pass") and banners reading: "Madrid will be the tomb of fascism!"

Popular resistance to fascism was far from the centre-left Republican government's first instinct as the Army of Africa rumbled towards Madrid from July to October 1936, brushing aside any opposition. A truce was the government's first port of call – it was paranoid that arming the radicals in Spain's trade

Ground crews load a German Heinkel He-111 bomber before a raid in 1937. Nearly every neighbourhood of Madrid suffered from Condor Legion bombing

A street in Madrid is pummelled by an air raid in which several hundred civilians were killed. The beleaguered city also suffered extensive damage from Nationalist artillery fire

Italian legionaries and Nationalist forces in one of the frontline trenches during the Siege of Madrid, 1938

unions would galvanise the revolution that had already taken control in Catalonia and Aragon. But the state's organs of power brought real danger to the Republic, with scores of Guardia Civil men defecting to join the insurgent force driving towards Madrid.

Meanwhile, pandemonium ruled in the city, as Franco's Fifth Column crawled out of the woodwork. Political Commissar André Marty reported on the impact of this clandestine activity: "White spies in the city are extraordinarily strong. Not long ago, a small shell factory was blown up by the Whites; an aerodrome with nine planes was destroyed because the aerodrome was lit up the entire night; a train carrying 350 motorcycles was destroyed by enemy bombs." With the government unable to secure a truce with Franco or organise adequate defences, José Giral took control on 19 July and armed the trade unions in Madrid, delivering 5,000 rifles, as well as 60,000 that were missing bolts.

SIEGE OF THE MONTAÑA BARRACKS

Meanwhile 2,500 troops and right-wing militia had declared their support for Franco, barricading themselves within the 19th-century Montaña barracks, west of the Plaza de España. Inside lay a stockpile of weapons, including the missing 60,000 bolts needed to arm the trade unions. When the barracks' occupants refused to hand over the bolts, a large crowd, including armed militia and Guardia Civil, surrounded the building and a firefight broke out. The next day, the barracks was bombarded by high-explosive shells from a 75mm field gun, as well as aircraft. With no reinforcements in sight, and no chance of escape, the rebels surrendered.

The growing crowd was buoyed by this easy victory and marched down the Plaza de España chanting: "Death to fascism." The battle for Montaña barracks was a microcosm of popular resistance to the coup emulated all over Spain, which prevented the bloodless takeover of Franco's dreams from coming to pass. Instead, he would have to take the country by military force, advancing towards Madrid from the old fortress at Badajoz, supported by General Emilio Mola from Burgos.

Backed by the German Condor Legion, a proto-Luftwaffe that deployed close air support as never seen before, Franco's column quickly routed any Republican militia in its path. As the Republican government secretly fled to Valencia, General Juan Yagüe and others urged haste from Franco. The Nationalist generals thought that nearby Republican forces would return to the capital as soon as it was besieged, making all other targets pointless diversions. Instead, Franco opted to divert south of Madrid to lift the Republican siege of the Alcázar in Toledo, a symbolic victory enabling Franco to recapture the historic residence of Spain's royal family.

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01 Siege of Alcázar

The Siege of Alcázar begins in Toledo on 21 July 1936. Franco is reluctant to pull troops away from Toledo, which significantly delays the advance to Madrid and gives Republican forces an opportunity to prepare the defence of Madrid.

02 Feint through Carabanchel

The Battle of Madrid begins in November 1936 with a Nationalist feint through the working class Carabanchel suburb, hoping to draw Republican forces to the south.

03 Attack at Casa de Campo

The Nationalists launch their primary assault in the Casa de Campo park in West Madrid, but are halted by Republican resistance.

04 Battle of Ciudad Universitaria

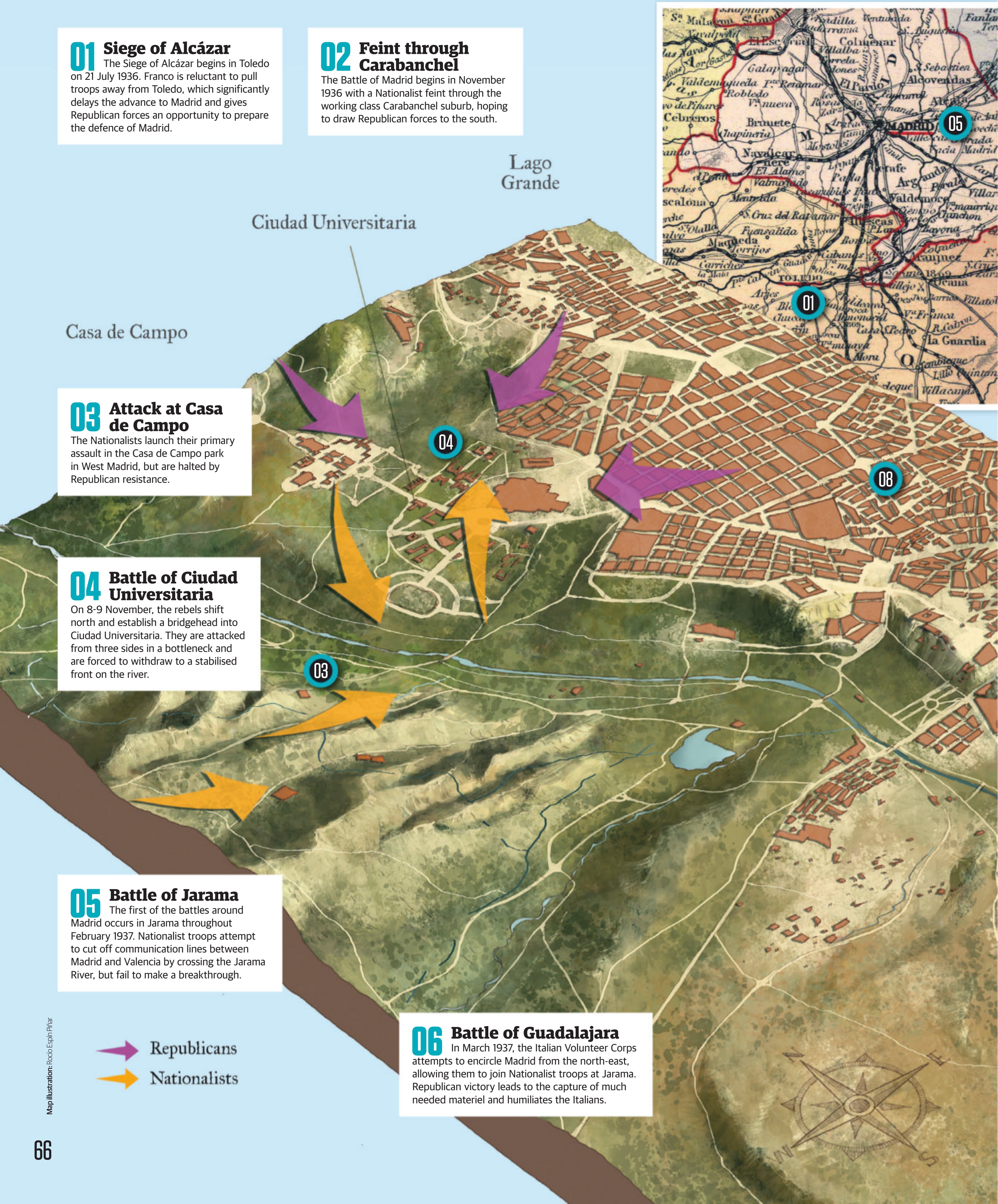
On 8-9 November, the rebels shift north and establish a bridgehead into Ciudad Universitaria. They are attacked from three sides in a bottleneck and are forced to withdraw to a stabilised front on the river.

05 Battle of Jarama

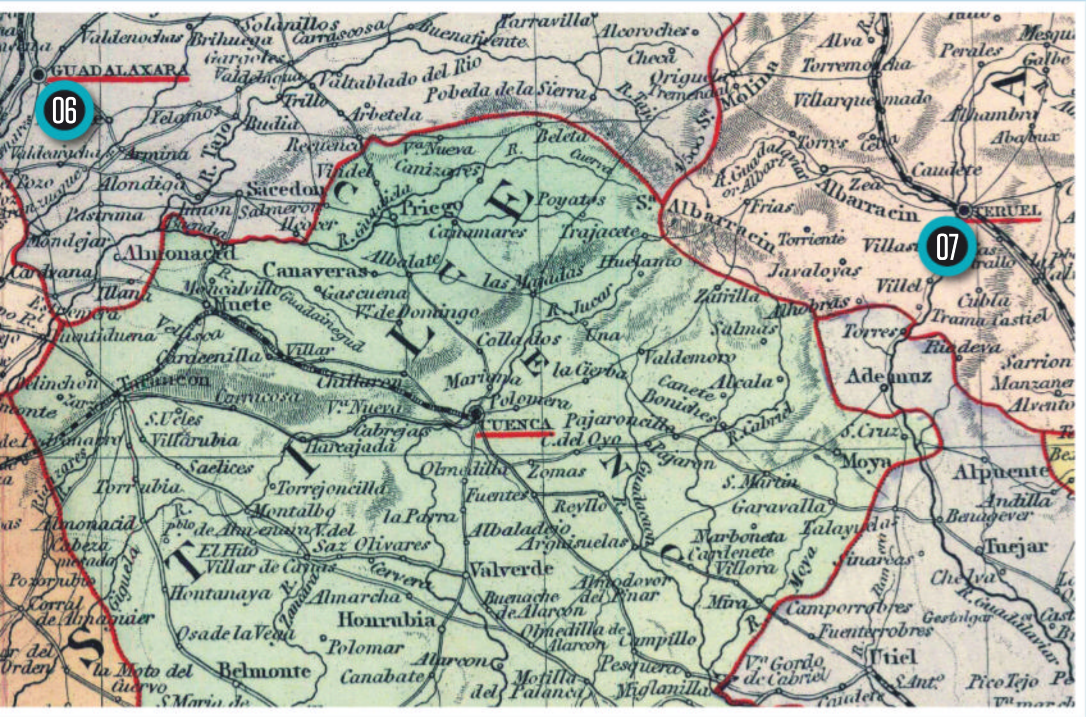
The first of the battles around Madrid occurs in Jarama throughout February 1937. Nationalist troops attempt to cut off communication lines between Madrid and Valencia by crossing the Jarama River, but fail to make a breakthrough.

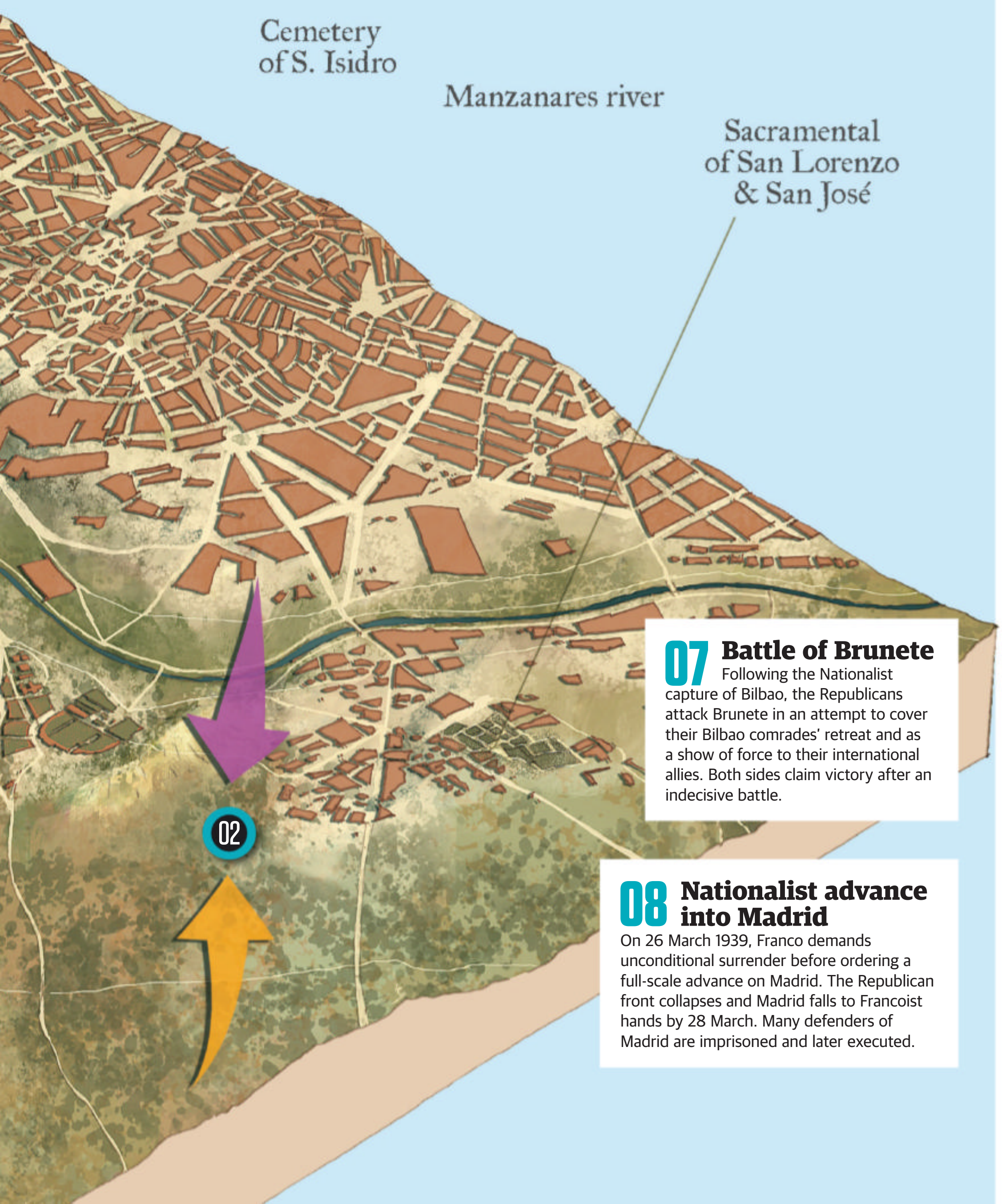
06 Battle of Guadalajara

In March 1937, the Italian Volunteer Corps attempts to encircle Madrid from the north-east, allowing them to join Nationalist troops at Jarama. Republican victory leads to the capture of much needed materiel and humiliates the Italians.



Map illustration: Rocío Espín Piñar





07 Battle of Brunete
Following the Nationalist capture of Bilbao, the Republicans attack Brunete in an attempt to cover their Bilbao comrades' retreat and as a show of force to their international allies. Both sides claim victory after an indecisive battle.

08 Nationalist advance into Madrid
On 26 March 1939, Franco demands unconditional surrender before ordering a full-scale advance on Madrid. The Republican front collapses and Madrid falls to Francoist hands by 28 March. Many defenders of Madrid are imprisoned and later executed.

The Republicans at Toledo were repelled with little effort from Franco's superior force, giving a sufficient boost in Nationalist morale for Franco to be declared Generalissimo and head of state by October. However, this delay gave the capital time to prepare politically and militarily for the siege. The government reformed under the socialist Francisco Largo Caballero, and thousands of workers were drafted into militias formed by left-wing political organisations and trade unions, comprising 90 percent of the forces defending Madrid. These units massed along the River Manzanares, a formidable natural barrier between the capital and the Nationalist advance from the west.

By the time Mola's forces cut through the Brunete suburb to the west of Madrid, the Republican defences were ready. Contemporary military observers estimated 150,000 men were needed to take the city, yet the Republican force of 42,000 troops outnumbered the Nationalists two-to-one. Less than half of the Republicans had combat experience, and many only learnt how to operate a rifle the evening before the battle. Most had less than ten rounds each, making live-firing practice impossible. However, they were highly motivated as news spread of the atrocities committed by the Nationalists on their advance.

BATTLE OF MADRID BEGINS

Urban conflict was alien to the Army of Africa, whose background was entirely in fighting guerrilla Berber tribesmen in the mountainous Republic of the Rif, North Morocco. Mola sought to create a front that would give his troops the open spaces they were accustomed to dominating. The Casa De Campo hunting estate and public park – five-times the size of Central Park in New York and cutting into Madrid from the west – was the perfect battleground for the Nationalists. While his main force was committed to a 1km front in Casa de Campo, the attack would begin with a feint in Carabanchel, a working-class suburb to the south where tall apartment blocks cast shadows over narrow streets. Mola hoped the Republicans would overcommit in the easily defended Carabanchel, enabling his main force to race through Casa de Campo and over the Puente de los Franceses (Bridge of the Frenchmen), allowing them to cross the Manzares into Madrid before the Republicans could react.

As the feint advanced, the Carabanchel apartment blocks bristled like porcupines with rifles. Exposed and disoriented, Nationalist troops fell in droves against Madrileños defenders who navigated instinctively through Madrid's urban hinterland. The Francoists hoped that the Republicans would sense weakness and bring further troops into the area, but they had discovered the plans on the body of an Italian officer in a destroyed tank. Instead, they limited troops in the district to just 12,000, with manpower committed to fortifying the southern portion of Carabanchel for street-by-street defence.

Meanwhile, 30,000 troops were positioned to defend against the primary assault in Casa de Campo between the Montaña barracks and the

Ciudad Universitaria (University City). This tactical foresight made line breaks impossible, and the offensive stalled. Only a small force was able to cross the river by 9 November in a short-lived bridgehead that was soon repelled by the recently arrived XI International Brigade.

The Nationalists succeeded in taking the Garabitas hills, from where they rained down artillery fire on the Gran Via, Madrid's central street and home to the Republican HQ. Meanwhile, a successful night assault on 9/10 November by the XI International Brigade ended any chance of a direct assault through the park. Fighting in Carabanchel to the south continued while much of the Nationalist force that had failed in Casa de Campo wheeled north-east, occupying the zone between the Ciudad Universitaria and Plaza de España.

BATTLE OF CIUDAD UNIVERSITARIA

The stalemate lasted less than a week, but it allowed for the arrival of José B Durruti's column of 4,000 anarchists and other militia groups to swell the Republican ranks. It was broken by a further Nationalist attack that created a bridgehead at the Bridge of the Frenchmen. After 6,000 troops advanced into the Ciudad Universitaria on 15 November, the Nationalists concentrated maximum firepower to expand their bridgehead. In turn, the Republicans reinforced this area, turning it into a bottleneck. After hand-to-hand combat, the Nationalists controlled three-quarters of the 14.2km^2 complex.

The Nationalist position became increasingly vulnerable as it advanced further and became exposed on three fronts. They had to stop and consolidate their position, so Franco and Mola switched from a ground assault to relentless aerial bombardment. Bombing brought havoc to residential districts, yet the Madrileños' resolve to defend their city was unwavering. A stable frontline ran from the Nationalist bridgehead on the Manzanares and south through the Ciudad Universitaria, Casa de Campo park, and Carabanchel as the battle petered out.

Fascist volunteers parade through the streets of Burgos in northern Spain, July 1936

ENCIRCLING MADRID

For the moment, Madrid was safe, and Franco decided to fight outside the capital to isolate the city from its supply lines. This began with the Battle of Coruna Road at the end of 1936, and 1937 saw Francoist humiliation at Jarama and Guadalajara.

The Battle of Jarama ran from January to February 1937. Franco resolved to cross the Jarama River to the south-east of Madrid, cutting its contact with Valencia. A Republican force of 40,000 troops outnumbered the 25,000 Nationalists, but assistance from the Condor Legion, two heavy machine gun battalions, a tank corps and batteries of 155mm and 88mm guns could turn the tide of battle. Moreover, the Army of Africa was finally fighting on familiar, open terrain, able to advance rapidly and overwhelm the unprepared Republicans. Having taken the west bank of the Jarama, they crossed but were halted by the Italian Garibaldi Battalion, who sallied from the International Brigades' entrenchments in the Pingarrón Heights to the east. At this point, Junkers of the Condor Legion entered the fray to take out the artillery that was hammering the halted Nationalist forces, but the bombers were no match in aerial combat to the counterattacking Soviet I-16 fighters.

On 12 February, Franco set his sights on what became known as 'Suicide Hill' after the British Battalion lost 375 of 600 men in a last stand, leaving just 80 Brits uninjured. Despite the desperate situation, only a small force of Nationalist troops made it to the Madrid-Valencia road under the command of Fernándo Barrón Ortiz. This unit was too small to sustain itself behind enemy lines, so it had to halt, but the Nationalist forces never caught up and a counterattack by 50 T-26 tanks on 14 February ended the advance.

"Even the olives were bleeding," Irish poet Charles Donnelly said during the futile counterattacks that continued in the Pingarrón Heights until the end of February as the Republicans attempted to retake the lost territory. Constant threats of court-martial and execution forced the inexperienced International Brigades towards the barrels of Nationalist machine guns. The fronts eventually stabilised, with the Madrid-Valencia Road remaining firmly out of reach

Moroccan and Nationalist troops fire at Republicans defending Casa de Campo, using a brick wall as cover

Men from the Guardia Civil prepare a machine gun at an outpost in the Guadarrama Mountains near Madrid, July 1936

Republicans defending a fortified position at the Battle of Brunete against Nationalist counterattacks

for the Nationalists. Yet this had been one of the civil war's most bloody battles, with each side estimated to have lost between 6,000 and 25,000 men.

Franco's men were exhausted after Jarama, but Italian reinforcements under the command of General Mario Roatta remained in good spirits following success at the Battle of Málaga. Victory against the exhausted Republican forces seemed easy, so they attacked in the 25km-wide Guadalajara pass on 8 March. Just 10,000 Republicans and one company of T-26 tanks were in the sector compared with 35,000 Italian troops. The Italians advanced 15-18km but were unexpectedly halted by a counterattack from the XI International Brigade on 9 March. Nationalist bombardment and advances over the next couple of days had little effect, with the Republicans reinforced from Italians and Poles from the XII International Brigade.

By 12 March, it was time for the Republicans to turn the tide of battle. Over 100 fighter planes and Katiuska ANT-40 bombers laid waste to Italian positions, who had no reprieve as their air force was grounded at water-logged airfields. A Republican advance was nearly unchallenged, seizing vital war material left by the fleeing Italians, including 16,000 shells, 12,000 grenades and 628 boxes of rifle ammunition.

REPUBLICAN COUNTER-OFFENCES

After successful defensive battles in the first half of 1937, it was time for a Republican counter-offensive to take the pressure off Madrid and show their Soviet backers that they could take the initiative. The Battle of Brunete was the first, fought in a suburb west of Madrid during 6-25 July. On the night of 6 July, Republican forces advanced 8km to encircle Brunete. Despite catching the Nationalists by surprise, the commanders insisted on painstakingly eliminating all pockets of resistance, no matter how small. The crawling Republican advance gave Franco and Mola's troops time to regroup and launch a three-pronged Nationalist counter-offensive beginning on 18 July. A force of 20,000 men attacked from the west, 10,000 from the east, and 8,000 through Brunette from the south. These attacks inflicted terrible losses on the Republicans and morale began to crack. Republican control of Brunette was short-lived, but when fighting petered out they still held Villanueva de la Cañada, Quijorna and Villanueva del Pardillo to the north of Brunete. Both sides claimed victory.

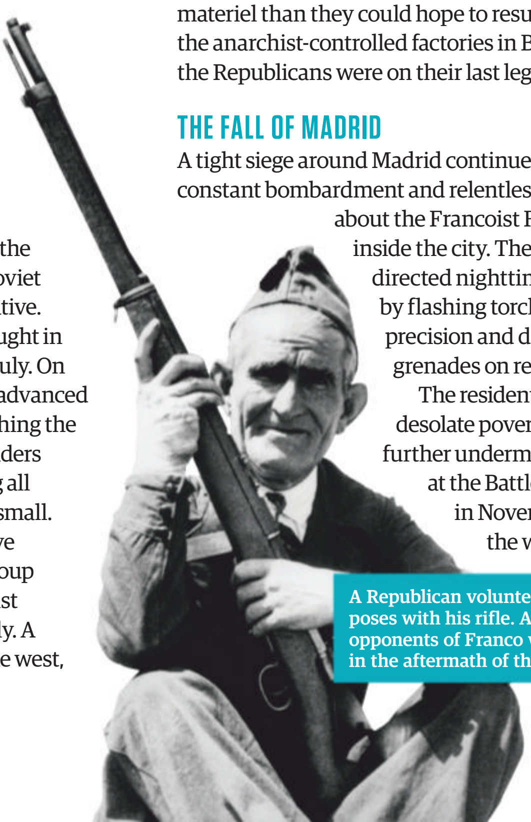
By the autumn and winter of 1937, the situation in the capital was getting dire, held together only by the determination of its supporters. Concern spread quickly in the Republican command when intelligence learned Franco was planning a major offensive in Madrid via the Guadalajara sector, which would surely take the beleaguered city, so they launched a diversionary attack at Teruel. Located nearly 300km from Madrid, the city was a symbol of Nationalist power in Aragon and a strike there would force the Nationalists to turn away from the capital.

The battle lasted for over two months and saw 110,000 killed and wounded. The city changed hands multiple times, with fighting coming to an end when the Nationalists encircled Teruel and trapped 14,500 Republican troops inside the city. Defeated and having lost more manpower and materiel than they could hope to resupply from the anarchist-controlled factories in Barcelona, the Republicans were on their last legs.

THE FALL OF MADRID

A tight siege around Madrid continued with constant bombardment and relentless paranoia about the Francoist Fifth Column inside the city. These agents directed nighttime shelling by flashing torches to aid precision and dropped grenades on rescue parties.

The residents lived in desolate poverty, with morale further undermined by defeat at the Battle of the Ebro in November 1938, the wholesale collapse of Republican fronts in Catalonia in the opening months of 1939, and the UK government formally recognising Franco's authority in February 1939. Madrid was doomed and Colonel Segismundo Casado and the politician Julián Besteiro challenged the militant socialist Prime Minister Juan Negrín. They formed the National Defence Council (CND) to negotiate a peace deal with Franco and pushed Negrín into exile. Negotiations with Franco were a disaster because he insisted on unconditional surrender, and Republican forces were in such disarray that the Nationalists entered Madrid on 26 March with little resistance.



A Republican volunteer in Madrid poses with his rifle. Around 200,000 opponents of Franco were executed in the aftermath of the war

AFTERMATH

It is impossible to say precisely how many perished during the Siege of Madrid. The estimated 10,000 (5,000 on each side) killed in the initial 1936 Battle of Madrid, made by historian Hugh Thomas, is only scratching the surface. The battles of Jarama, Guadalajara and Brunete, which claimed a further 32,000 lives collectively, were connected with the Nationalist drive to encircle Madrid. Meanwhile, the Battle of Teruel would unlikely have been so bloody had it not been critical for Franco's planned offensive on Madrid to be delayed.

The raising the Nationalist flag in Madrid confirmed Franco's control of the nation, allowing him to settle into being Caudillo of Spain. In consolidating power, he escalated the brutal White Terror, which had simmered during the civil war, imprisoning and executing enemies. Up to 200,000 died during the post-war Terror, while up to 500,000 were held in Francoist concentration camps. While visiting in July 1939, Galeazzo Ciano, the Italian foreign minister, estimated that Madrid had the most summary executions in the nation at 200 to 250 a day, up to 100 more than Barcelona.

At the same time, the Francoists developed an official war narrative and memorials were popping up all over Spain. The Valley of the Fallen, 10km from Madrid, remains the most controversial. Over 40,000 Nationalists and Republicans are buried there. The monument reads "Caídos por Dios y por España" ("Fallen for God and for Spain"), a Francoist slogan and reflection of how the Republican experience of civil war remains opaque.

All images: © Alamy, © Getty Images

What If…

THE PRINCES IN THE TOWER HAD NOT DISAPPEARED?

A young king fulfils his destiny, forever changing the royal line and all of English history

Interview by David J Williamson

INTERVIEW WITH

© Steve Cross

NATHEN AMIN

Amin is an author and historian from Carmarthenshire, West Wales, who specialises in the reign of Henry VII. He has authored five books, most recently *Son of Prophecy: The Rise of Henry Tudor*. In 2022, he was appointed a fellow of the Royal Historical Society.

It's one of the most enduring, intriguing and hotly contested mysteries in English history. What really happened to the princes in the Tower of London in 1483? A young King Edward V (although he had yet to be officially crowned) and his younger brother Richard were imprisoned then murdered by their ambitious and heartless uncle, Richard of Gloucester, to make the throne his own. That is the story accepted by many over the centuries, but the actual fate of the two boys has never been confirmed beyond all doubt and the debate continues today. Had things been different, and the young Edward V had ruled England, what seismic changes would there have been for the royal lineage and English history?

Could Richard III have been the 'power behind the throne' rather than take it for himself?

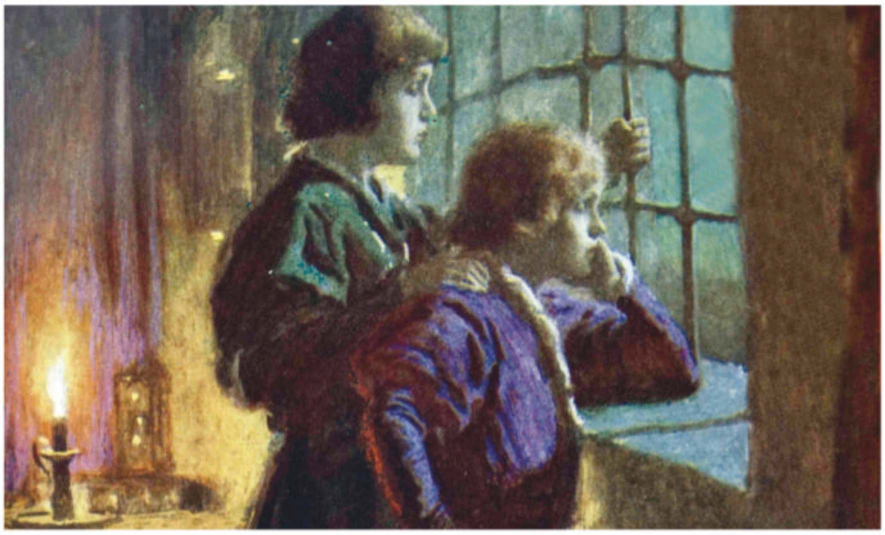
Much of the speculation regarding the Princes in the Tower, their deposing, imprisonment, disappearance and fate rests upon how one interprets the motivations of their uncle, Richard, Duke of Gloucester and later Richard III. Was he an overambitious and ruthless noble who plotted his way to the top? Or a reactive and honourable figure who reluctantly stepped up when fresh information came to light about his nephews' status? These interpretations often drive how one analyses the events of 1483 and reaches a conclusion.

When Richard's brother Edward IV died, there are good grounds to believe the deceased king had faith his younger sibling would, if not quite be the power behind the throne, be the stable force that guided the boy king into adulthood. There is certainly nothing to suggest that Richard had any designs on the throne in the days before or after his brother's death.

But minority rule was tricky in medieval England, for although the theory of supportive adults guiding the royal minors was sound, in practice, political divergence and fragile egos often disturbed the peace. During the minority of Richard II in the 1380s, his uncle John of Gaunt was suspected, almost certainly unfairly, of harbouring ambitions for his nephew's crown and endured periods of deep unpopularity and political estrangement. And when Henry VI was a child in the 1420s and 30s, although nobody questioned his right to be king, the squabbling between his various uncles over their roles nearly brought England to the brink of civil war.

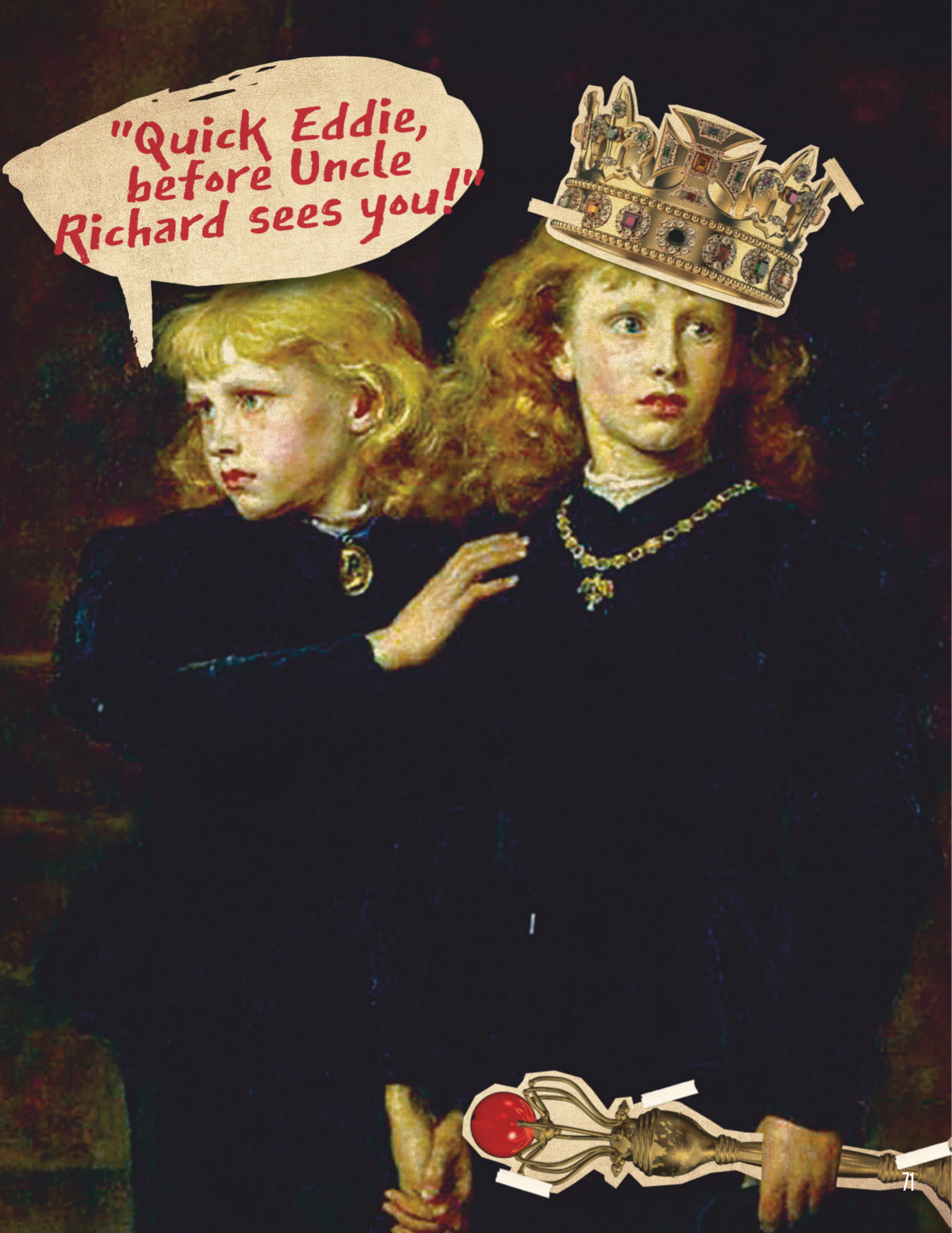
In 1483, then, I personally don't see that Richard could have been the principal power guiding the throne due to robust political opposition from the Woodville faction, that is, the influential but lowborn maternal relations of the boy king, Edward V. This cabal, centred around the recently widowed queen, Elizabeth Woodville, envisioned a future where they guided the boy they had raised, not the paternal royal uncle he barely knew. Richard faced isolation.

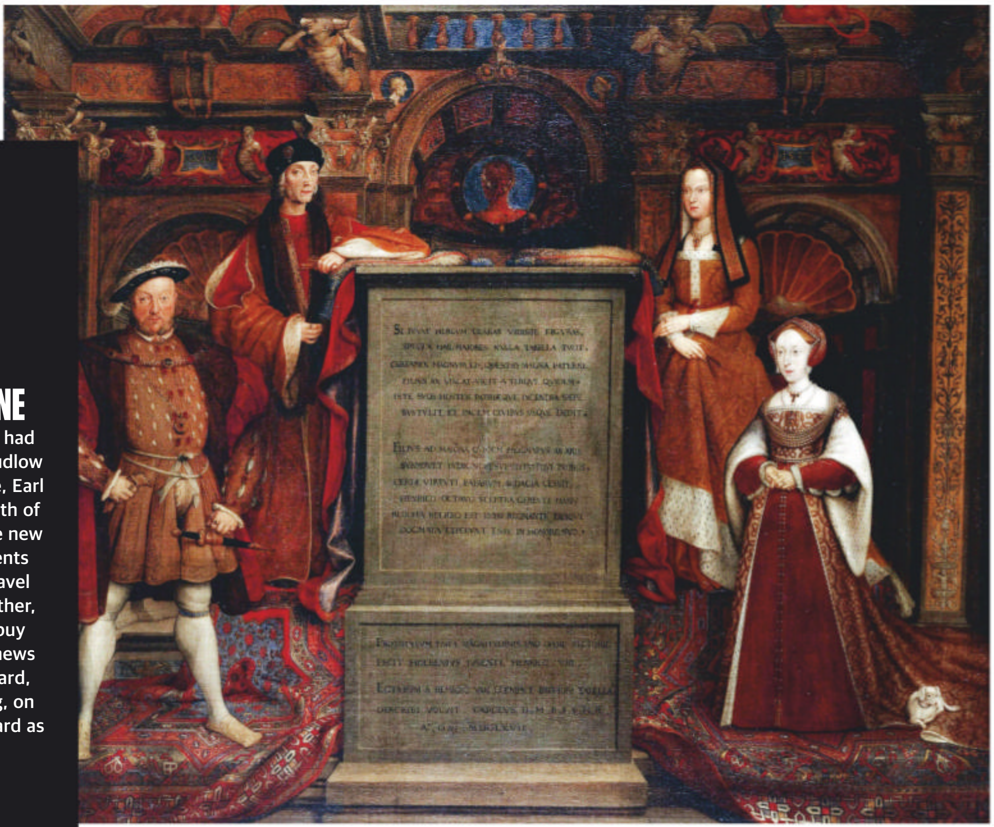
It is difficult to see how Richard and the Woodvilles could have coexisted, with one taking preeminence over the other. Richard was the senior adult royal in the kingdom, who by every right imaginable should have been in the driving seat while the king was a minor - but the Woodvilles were liable to yield control of the fortunate position they found themselves in. Relations



All Images: © Alamy, © Getty Images

RIGHT To this day, the fate of the Princes in the Tower - Edward and Richard - remains the topic of fierce debate


"Quick Eddie, before Uncle Richard sees you!"



THE PAST

APRIL 1483

A DASH FOR THE THRONE

The young Edward, Prince of Wales, had been undertaking his education at Ludlow Castle under the tutelage of his uncle, Earl Rivers. It is here he learns of the death of his father, Edward IV, making him the new king at just 12 years old. Arrangements are immediately made for him to travel to London. In the meantime, his mother, Elizabeth Woodville, desperate to buy her son some time, delays sending news to her dead husband's brother Richard, Duke of Gloucester, despite the king, on his deathbed, having appointed Richard as Lord Protector to his heir.

APRIL 1483

RICHARD MAKES HIS MOVE

Once the news reaches Richard he acts immediately, intercepting the young king's entourage on the road to London. The following day he takes complete charge, against the young king's wishes. Edward's uncle, Earl Rivers, is arrested and sent north, and later executed. Upon his arrival in London with the young king, Richard places him in the Tower of London 'for his own protection'. Now feeling completely vulnerable and out-manoeuvred by Richard, Elizabeth Woodville and her family, including the young Richard, Duke of York, take sanctuary in Westminster Abbey for their own safety. For now, they are protected from Richard, Duke of Gloucester, but he still has young King Edward V.

JULY 1483

INTO THIN AIR

Despite her resistance, Woodville has to surrender her young son Richard to the Duke of Gloucester, reuniting the two princes in the Tower. Preparations begin for Edward's coronation in June 1483, and having the boys in the Tower for their protection does not seem unreasonable. But in mid-June Parliament declares the two princes are illegitimate due to their father the king having been contracted to marry another before he married Woodville, making their marriage invalid. An entry in the *Great Chronicle* on 16 June tells of the princes in the Tower gardens "shooting arrows". After that they are seen less and less. On 6 July 1483 their uncle is crowned Richard III. The boys are never seen or heard of again.

degenerated rapidly, and there seems to have been little inclination by either side to find a middle ground.

How would the princes' freedom have impacted the ambitions of those around them, particularly Margaret Beaufort's ambitions for her son, Henry Tudor, and how might she act?

When Richard III becomes king of England, there are immediately attempts to reverse this from a significant faction of Yorkists who view his rise as predicated upon illegal grounds – that is, Richard usurping the birthright of his nephews. This pushback is led by men who have long sworn to serve the sons of Edward IV, largely members of the southern gentry who, like the Woodville family, anticipate a prosperous future under a youthful king they had helped prepare for his reign from the moment he was born. Regardless of lesser motivations, they are driven by the restoration of Edward V.

If Edward and his brother Prince Richard of York were successfully sprung from the Tower of London in the summer of 1483, as there was perhaps an attempt to do so, then all subsequent focus for rebellion would have been centred around these sons of York and none other.

For their own reasons, namely the promised restoration to his noble title Earl of Richmond and the hefty Beaufort inheritance he stood to receive in future, Henry Tudor and Margaret Beaufort would have enthusiastically supported these attempts. There is no question of mother or son having any designs on the throne themselves until the Princes in the Tower were presumed dead. Why would anyone support their almost non-existent claim if the widely accepted heirs were still alive? There is no question that if the princes were free, the focus of the Tudor-Beaufort party would have been restoring them, in return for reward, of course.

Would Edward V's ascendency to the throne mean unending conflict between York and Lancaster?

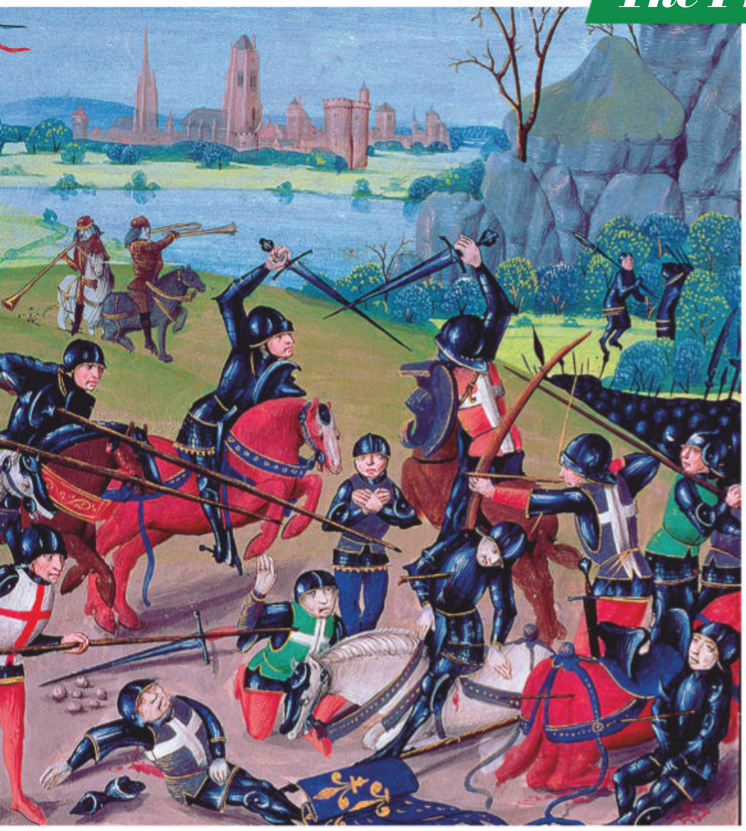
In many respects, by 1483 the conflict between the Houses of York and Lancaster had been resolved. Back in 1471, Edward IV inflicted a total defeat on his Lancastrian enemies at the battles of Barnet and Tewkesbury. With his rival Henry VI soon put to death, following his son Prince Edward of Westminster to the grave, the Lancastrian cause was over. Other Lancastrian claimants, like the dukes of Somerset and Exeter were also killed, prompting one foreign ambassador to note that Edward IV had "chosen to crush the seed" of his enemies.

What occurs in 1483 is a breach within the House of York itself, as it splinters between those that support Richard III and those that don't. Once the Princes in the Tower are believed to be dead, many transfer their loyalties to Henry Tudor, who reinvents himself as a Lancastrian claimant and builds a compelling story that the wars, which have not been active for a generation by this time, can be ended by him uniting the rival houses by marrying Elizabeth of York, the sister of the missing Edward V.

To that end, then, if Edward V accedes to the throne peacefully in 1483, he has no fear

ABOVE-LEFT The powerful Tudor Dynasty may never have existed

BELOW Richard III has long been suspected of murdering his nephews



ABOVE There could still have been civil war between ambitious family factions

of the scourge of Lancastrianism, for that has been condemned to the past through his father's victories.

What marital alliance may have been possible, and sensible, for the young Edward V?

As king of England, there is every expectancy that Edward V would marry a prestigious foreign princess who would bring considerable wealth, influence and political connections to his kingdom. By marrying the future Edward V's mother Elizabeth Woodville, a widow of little political import, his father Edward IV provoked a political crisis that alienated members of his nobility and resulted in him being briefly tumbled from his throne. History, it is fair to assume, would not have repeated itself so soon.

Indeed, as a prince, Edward had been betrothed to Anna, daughter and heir of Francois II, Duke of Brittany. It was envisioned by his father that as well as securing the vital cross-Channel Anglo-Breton political and military alliance, Edward's sons would inherit both England and Brittany. As shown by Anna's troubled marital future, much could change, of course, but such a match would have been eagerly pursued had Edward been permitted to remain upon his throne.

Is there a possible scenario where the princes were given their freedom, but Edward did not take the throne?

Whether the Princes in the Tower would be permitted to have their freedom, albeit as the disinherited and illegitimate sons of Edward IV, comes back to the question of interpreting the past. Some feel that once they had been declared illegitimate by their uncle Richard III's January 1484 Parliament, they no longer posed any threat to him and were left to be. This is a naive and implausible reading of the medieval period.

Illegitimate or otherwise, Edward V (or 'Edward Bastard' after his removal from the throne) would have remained a credible threat to Richard III (or his successors) for as long as he lived, whether through his own actions or those who conspired in his name. Since Parliamentary Acts could be reversed (and indeed Edward's own status was reversed in 1485 after his presumed death), there was nothing stopping his claim to the throne being pursued.

In the previous century, claimants barred from the throne by Parliament on account of their alleged rebellion but who nevertheless proved victorious in taking the crown included Henry IV, Edward IV, Henry VI and later Henry VII.

There is no conceivable scenario where Edward V, as a deposed king, would not remain a credible threat to the king that replaced him, or future monarchs that would follow. Indeed, as shown during the reign of Henry VII when he was plagued by conspiracies in the name of Edward V's cousin Edward, Earl of Warwick, also legally barred from the throne, the parchment these were written on were rarely worth the ink used when it came to claiming the crown. Warwick was eventually put to death, confirmation of the threat one posed regardless of status.

This was a pragmatic age, a time of bitter dynastic conflict, where threats real or imagined could not be permitted to prosper.

How different would the royal line look if Edward V had become king?

This is difficult to predict, short of saying the name Tudor would be mere footnote in history, relegated to academic journals poured over by the few, rather than the global phenomenon enjoyed by the many. Perhaps the Yorks would be the dynasty that captured attentions globally in the 21st century.

If Edward and his queen were blessed with a multitude of children, this may have proven a blessing for the Yorks and England, or a curse. A lack of heirs under the Tudors drove England to bloodshed through the paranoid machinations of Henry VIII but, likewise, the medieval godsend of five sons born to Edward III in the 14th century triggered widespread dynastic warfare between the various strands of his descendants a few generations later as they all had a claim. Who is to say the 16th century would not have been the War of the White Rose? ○

THE POSSIBILITY

1530s

NO BREAK WITH ROME?

The possibility of the Tudor dynasty never coming into being raises the question of Henry VIII and his split with Rome. The English Reformation and the advent of Protestantism in England may have been altogether more peaceable and protracted, if, indeed, it even happened. The Church of England as we know it may never have been born, with perhaps even a more tolerant society where differing Christian beliefs lived side by side. And the political fallout from the break with Rome that came out of the split, pitting England against the Catholic powers of Europe, may never have come to pass.

1485 ONWARDS

SINGLE WHITE ROSE

Instead of the unifying symbol of the Tudor rose – a combination of the white and red roses of Lancaster and York – it could've been down to the White Rose of York alone to have a strengthening and stabilising influence on England, its people and its politics. But the opposite could also have been the case. Should Edward V and his queen have had several children, then the potential for claims and counter-claims for the throne would've increased, each supported by followers wishing to further their own aspirations in a period that was packed with brutal political ambition.

1580s ONWARDS

EMPIRE CLOSER TO HOME

The roots of the British Empire can be found in Tudor exploration and expansionism, particularly after religious isolation in the later 16th century. The House of York may have followed suit and the British Empire that came to dominate the 19th century may have developed pretty much as we know it. But if the House of York had striven to pursue their long-held ambitions to conquer France instead, expanding in a more localised way, then the gaining of territories in the New World and the rivalries with other expanding powers such as Spain would've been on European soil. British influence around the globe would've been much more limited.

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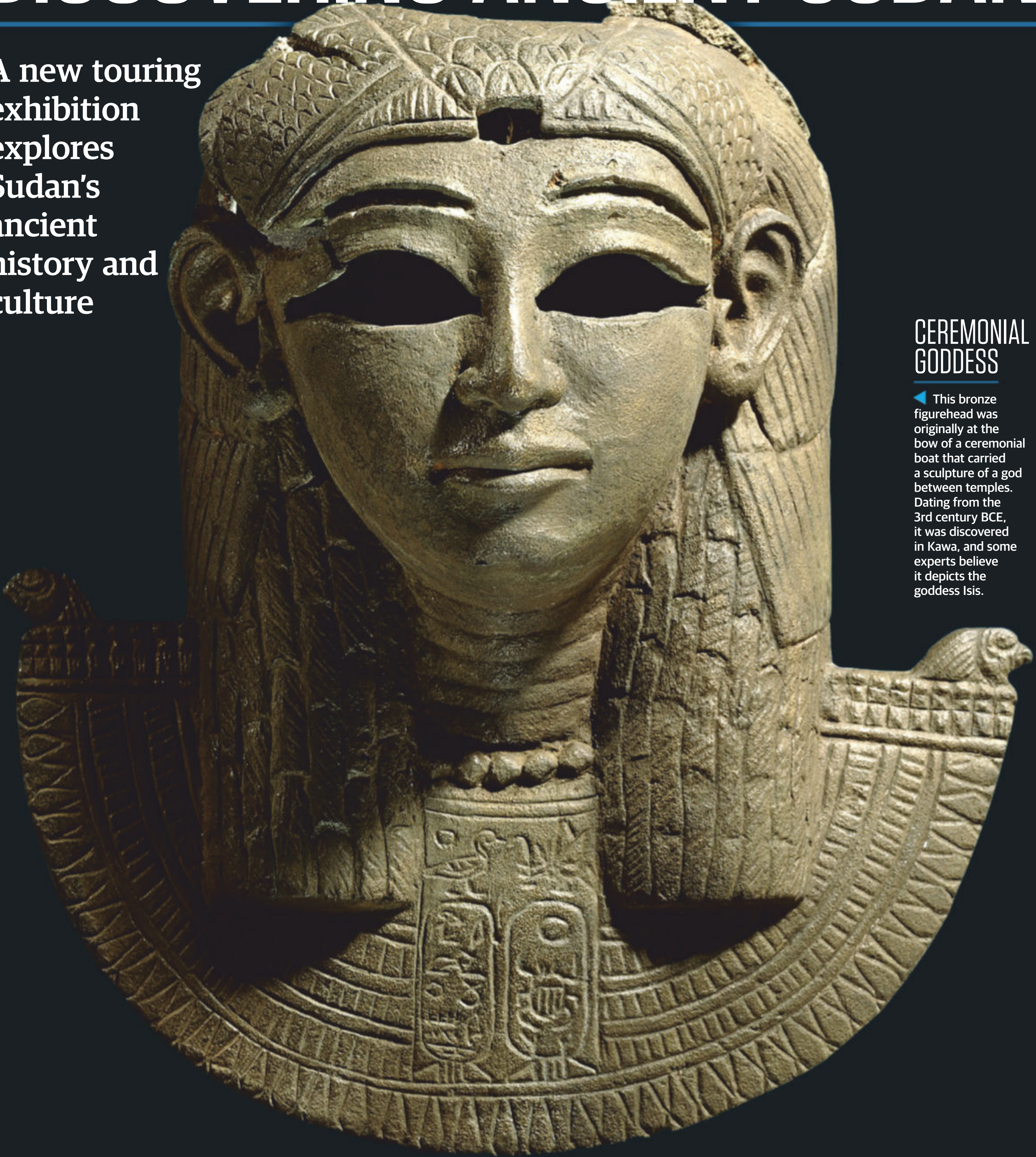
DISCOVERING ANCIENT SUDAN

A new touring exhibition explores Sudan's ancient history and culture



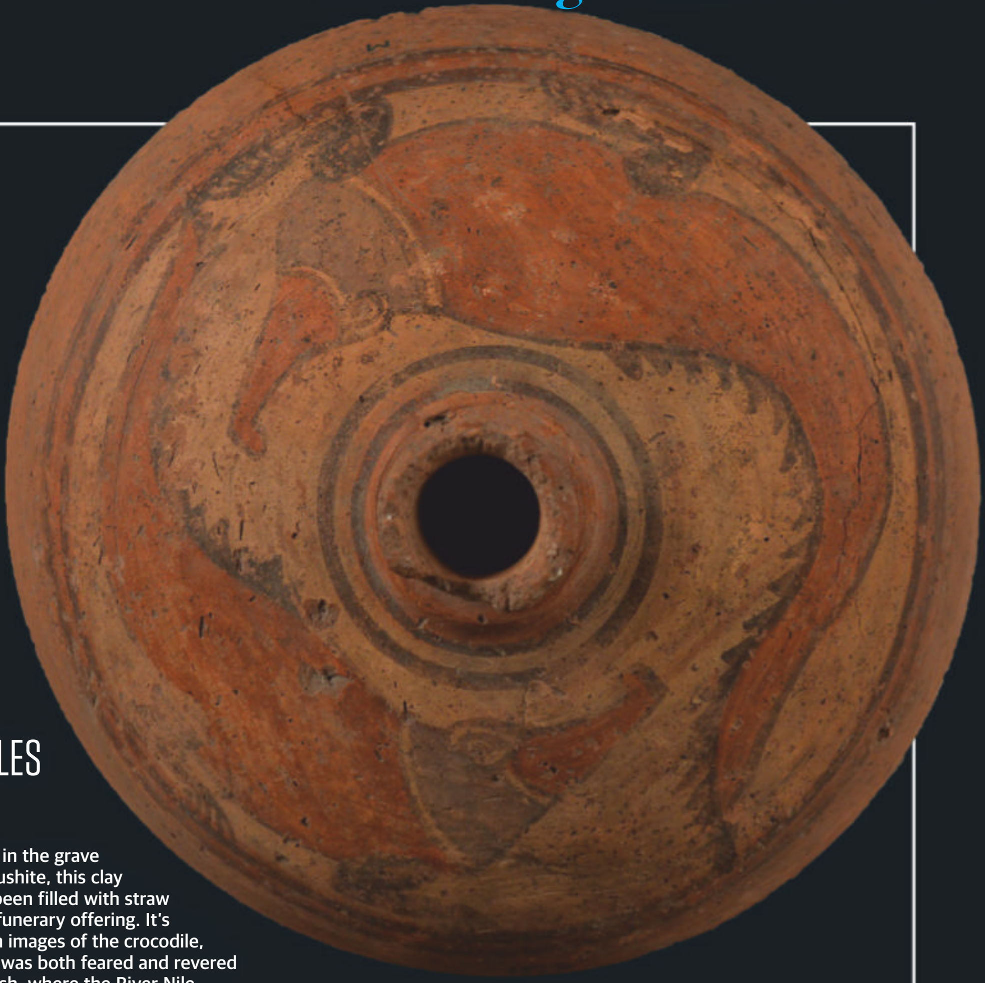
CEREMONIAL GODDESS

◀ This bronze figurehead was originally at the bow of a ceremonial boat that carried a sculpture of a god between temples. Dating from the 3rd century BCE, it was discovered in Kawa, and some experts believe it depicts the goddess Isis.

Nearly 3,000 years ago a civilisation flourished in what is now modern-day Sudan. At its height, the powerful Kingdom of Kush was one of the biggest empires the world has ever seen, ruled by a line of formidable kings and queens. A wealth of Kushite archaeological riches have been discovered in Sudan, but the country's ancient heritage is threatened by the ongoing civil war, which has displaced millions of people.

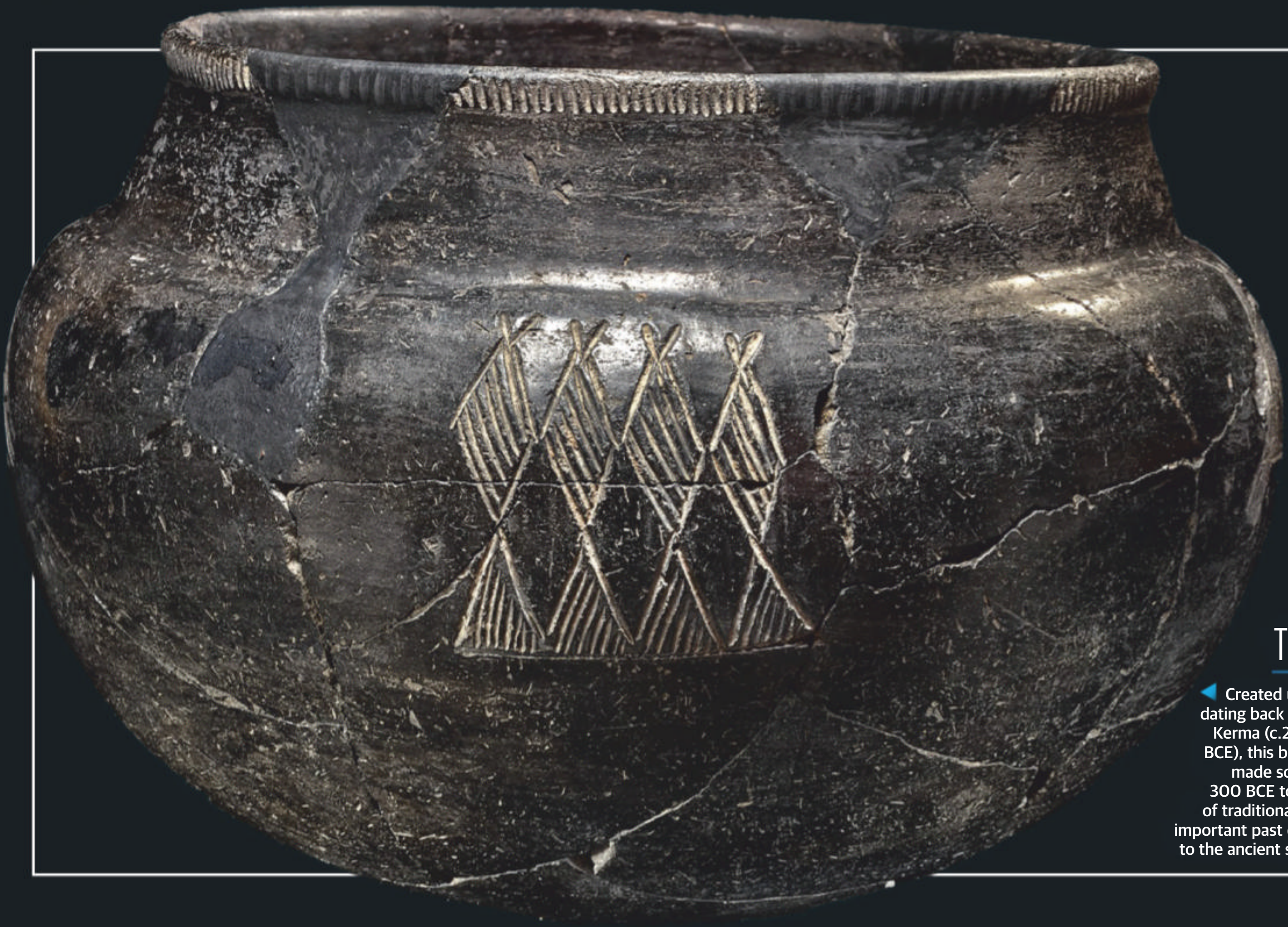
Now a new British Museum Spotlight Loan, consisting of a number of significant Kushite artefacts, is travelling to two UK museums to showcase Sudan's fascinating history. "Ancient Sudan: Enduring Heritage will introduce audiences to a deep, rich culture that is not defined by present conflict," says the British Museum.

The touring exhibition is partnering with local community groups at each of its venues, beginning with the Sudanese Community In And Around Portsmouth and the Rural Refugee Network at the tour's first stop – Portsmouth Museum and Art Gallery. Ancient Sudan: Enduring Heritage will explore the role of women, religion and craftsmanship in the Kingdom of Kush, while also highlighting the importance of current conservation and protection efforts.



CROCODILES IN CLAY

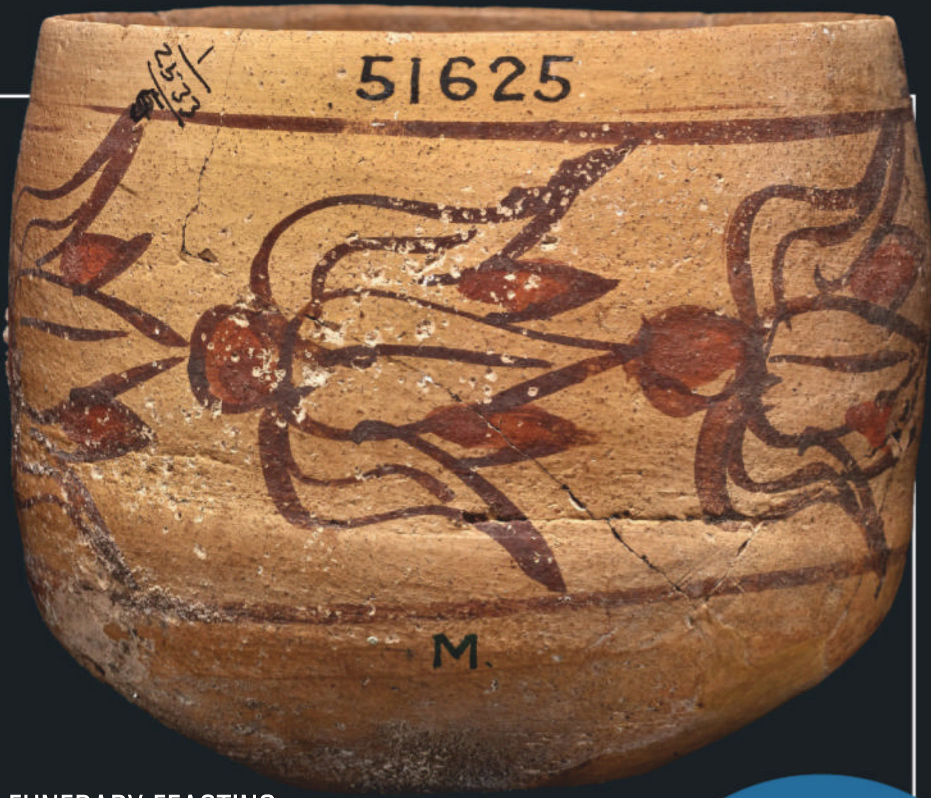
Discovered in the grave of a wealthy Kushite, this clay water jar had been filled with straw and used as a funerary offering. It's decorated with images of the crocodile, an animal that was both feared and revered throughout Kush, where the River Nile played a central role in daily life.



ANCIENT TECHNIQUES

Created using old methods dating back to the Kingdom of Kerma (c.2500 BCE – c.1500 BCE), this black clay bowl was made some time between 300 BCE to 400 CE. The use of traditional skills shows how important past communities were to the ancient societies of Sudan.

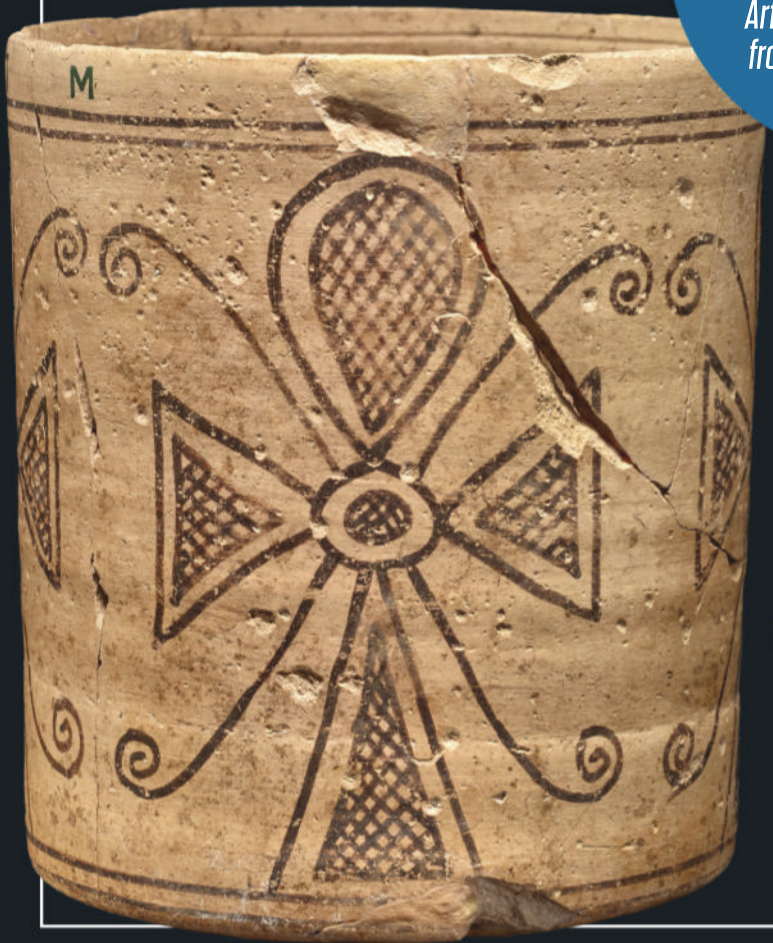
All images: © The Trustees of the British Museum



FUNERARY FEASTING

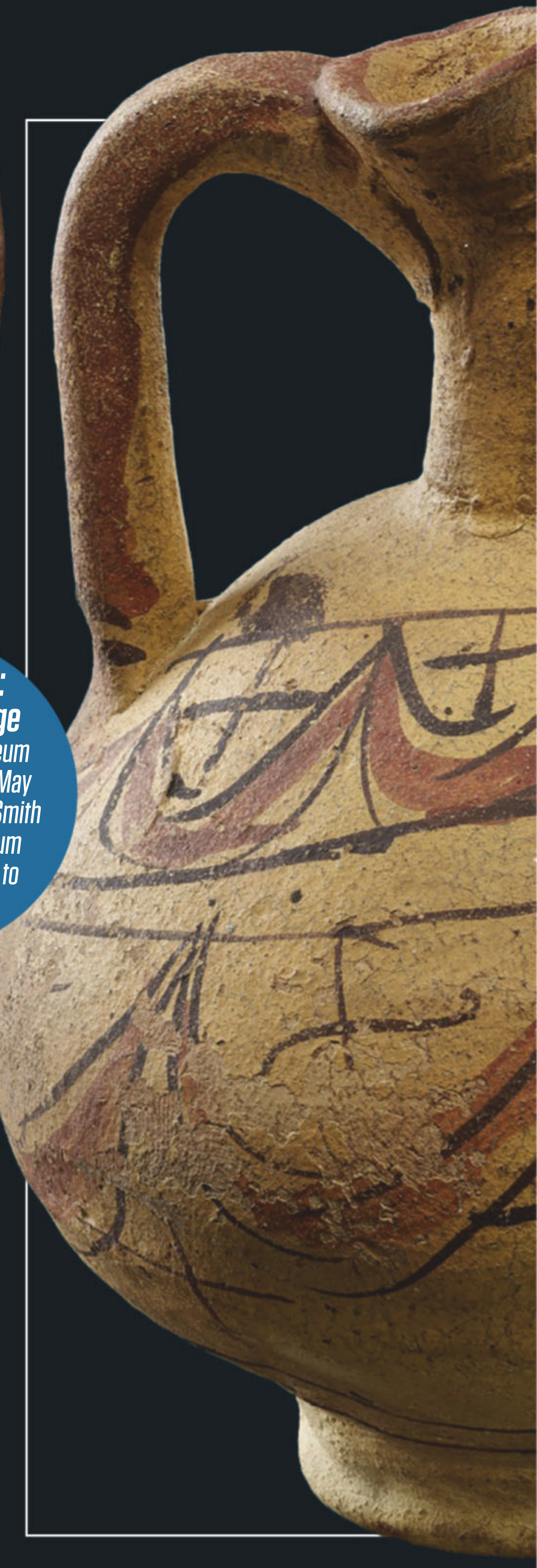
▲ The inclusion of cups such as this in ancient Sudan's funerary rituals suggests that feasting was an important part of society. It is decorated with lotus flowers, which symbolise creation and rebirth.

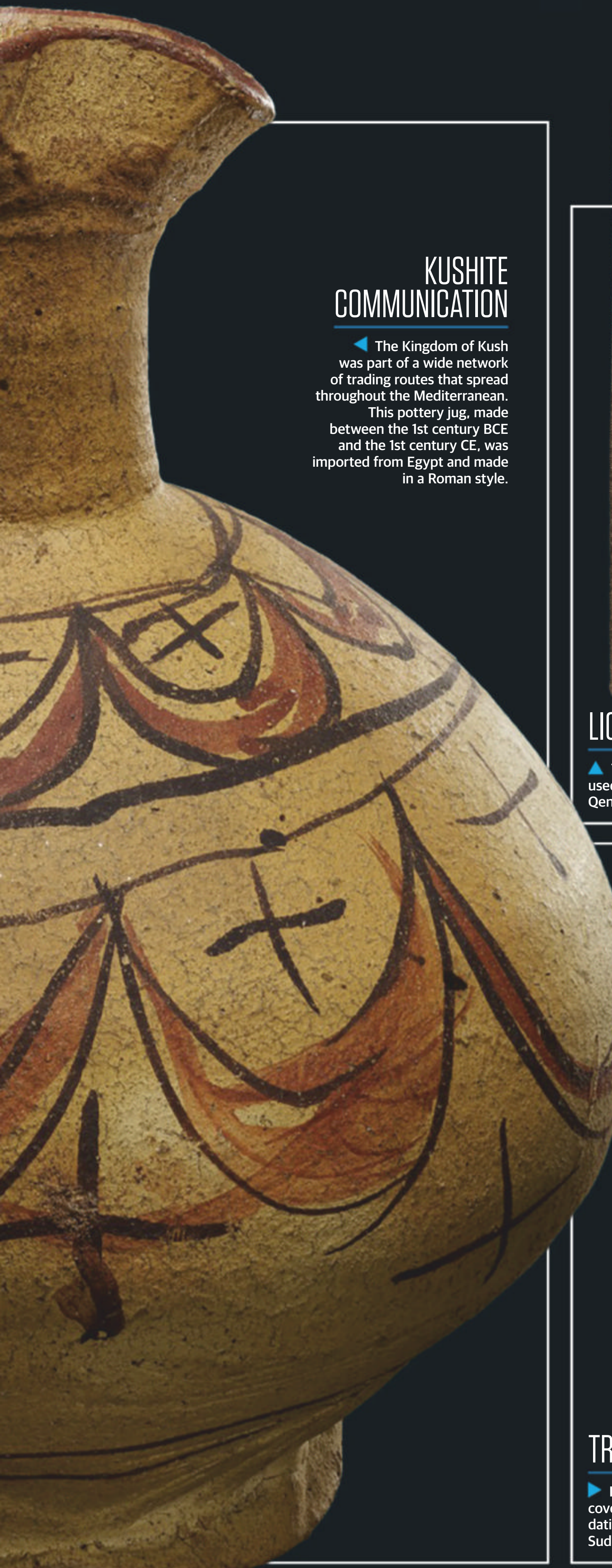
Ancient Sudan: Enduring Heritage *is at Portsmouth Museum and Art Gallery until 11 May 2025, then the Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum from 11 October 2025 to 11 January 2026*



EGYPTIAN INFLUENCE

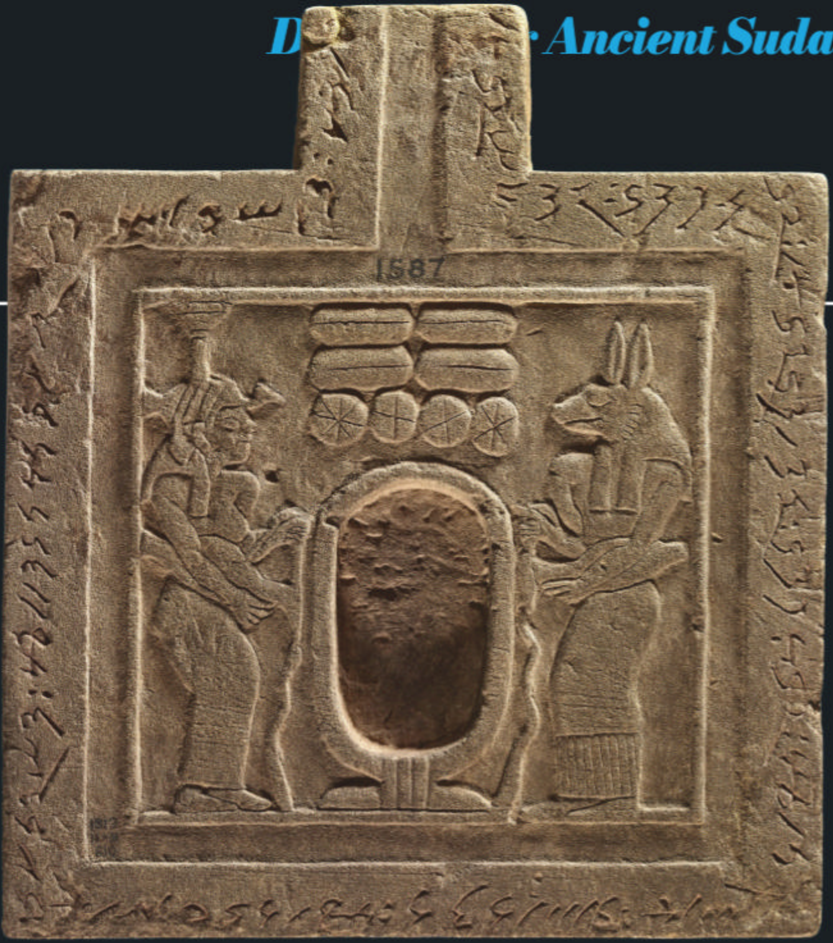
◀ This pottery beaker, made between 75 CE and 150 CE, is decorated with black ankh symbols. These icons were introduced to Sudan from Egypt during the New Kingdom (c.1550 BCE – 1069 BCE) when Egyptian forces colonised the area.





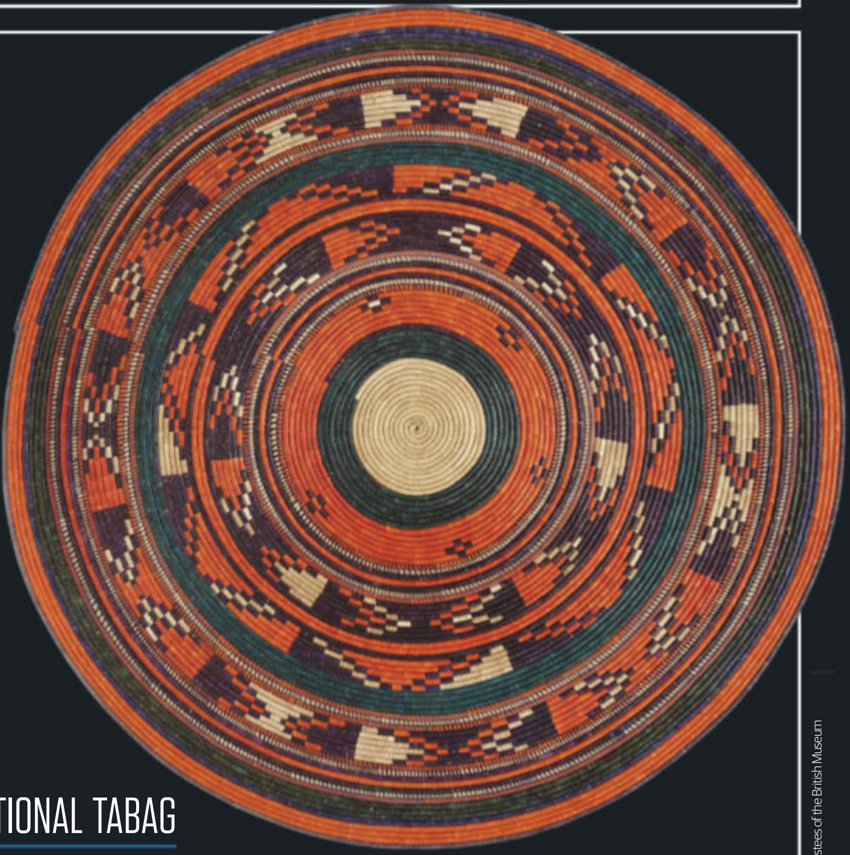
KUSHITE COMMUNICATION

◀ The Kingdom of Kush was part of a wide network of trading routes that spread throughout the Mediterranean. This pottery jug, made between the 1st century BCE and the 1st century CE, was imported from Egypt and made in a Roman style.



LIQUID OFFERINGS

▲ This sandstone table, dating from between 25 CE to 150 CE, was used to offer libations to the dead. It belonged to a Kushite called Qenabelile and features inscriptions in the Meroitic language.



TRADITIONAL TABAG

▶ In Sudan, a woven object called a tabag is used to cover and carry food. Though this is a modern example dating from the 1970s, the tabag has a long tradition in Sudan going back thousands of years.

All images: © The Trustees of the British Museum

REVIEWS

The books, TV shows and films causing a stir in the history world this month

©Vincent Productions

RIEFENSTAHL

A masterful and profound documentary about personal and historic blindness

Certificate: 15 **Director:** Andres Veiel **Cast:** Leni Riefenstahl, Horst Kettner, Ray Müller **Released:** 9 May

How to solve a problem like Leni Riefenstahl? Andres Veiel's new documentary about the troublesome life of the German filmmaker, infamous for the Hitler-worshipping *Triumph of the Will* (1935), addresses the issue and ultimately suggests we will never solve the problem; that it's a fool's errand to try. Her goose-stepping Nuremberg rally extravaganza was a sickening hagiography – whether she accepted the charge or not – to a poisonous regime. Documentary or propaganda? It's clearly the latter, despite Riefenstahl's protestations. She was never a member of the Nazi Party, sure, but her camera deified Hitler and the Third Reich. After the Second World War it was her conveniently selective memory, factual inaccuracies about her past and ghoulishly weird pride in once being Hitler's buddy that appalled a post-war generation.

There hasn't been a feature about Riefenstahl since Ray Müller's superb 1993 epic *The Wonderful, Horrible Life of Leni Riefenstahl*. What's new is the amount of material sourced from Riefenstahl's own archives and a cooler gaze on the subject than Müller allowed. This works greatly in its favour, as Veiel begins to construct a complex portrait of this former wannabe ballerina turned movie actress turned most controversial director of the 20th century. Riefenstahl seemed to revel in her notoriety and obsessively collected newspaper and magazine clippings and letters, both for and against her. Still, it wasn't hard to rattle her cage. She had a conscience, but the constant questions from the press about what exactly she knew regarding crimes against humanity infuriated Riefenstahl, because it was at the behest of what she thought mattered most, mattered more than six million dead in the gas chambers: her films.

Sometimes she was like a child screaming: "It's not fair!" at the world's media, while in other moments we see somebody pleased – if not downright amazed – at having had a front row seat to history. It's this dualism in Riefenstahl that maddened many and rendered her at times staggeringly unsympathetic. She absolutely knew more than she let on, and because of this her reputation has never drifted into the fog of history and faded away.

But *Riefenstahl* is neither character assassination nor revisionist. It gives us an artist with blood on their hands whether they admitted it or not. And she was an incredible filmmaker. The 1932 folkloric fairy tale *The Blue Light* remains a beguiling and photographically mesmerising cinematic marvel, as does the two-part *Olympiad* (1938). Her innovations in sports coverage can be seen every time you watch the television.

Bigging up the murderous Nazi regime will forever remain the albatross around her neck, the toxic legacy, key evidence that her ambitions lacked any moral consideration. Veiel's documentary is excellent, expertly put together and illuminating from start to finish. Riefenstahl might not have been a card-carrying fascist, but she was a fellow traveller regardless. She was bitter the war was lost, the 'great German future' stolen. Can we really separate aesthetic brilliance from grim events? The question haunts us as much as Riefenstahl's refusal to face the truth. ***MC***

★★★★★

Reviews by
Martyn Conterio, Callum McKelvie, Jonathan Gordon, Emily Staniforth

STORY OF A MURDER: THE WIVES, THE MISTRESS AND DR CRIPPEN

The author of *The Five* turns her attention to the grizzly case of Britain's Bluebeard, Dr Crippen

Author: Hallie Rubenhold **Publisher:** Doubleday **Price:** £25 **Released:** Out now

In 2019 Hallie Rubenhold's *The Five* was released to rave reviews, winning the Baillie Gifford Prize and being shortlisted for the Wolfson History Prize. It reexamined the oft-told story of serial killer Jack the Ripper by exploring the lives of the women he murdered. Now Rubenhold has followed that monumental work with a reassessment of another famous British murder case: Dr Crippen.

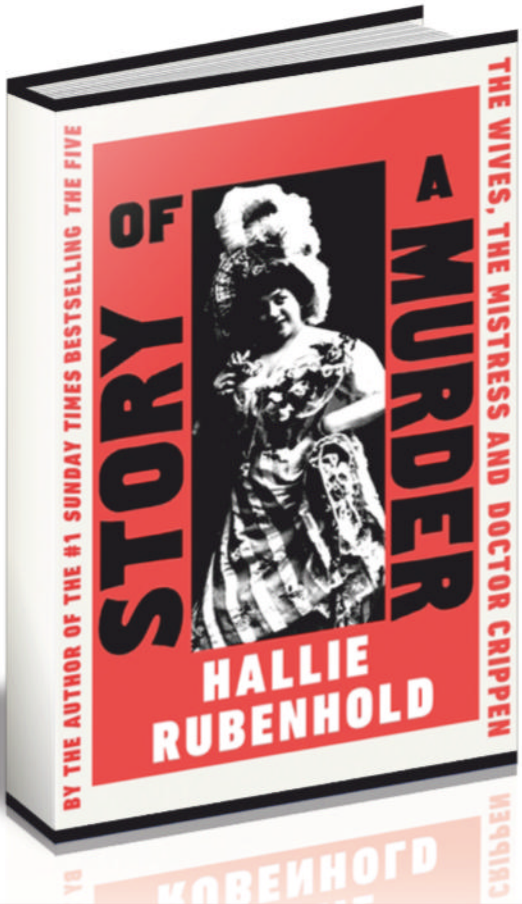
Hawley Harvey Crippen was an American doctor living in Britain who on 31 July 1910 made history as the first criminal to be captured using the transatlantic telegraph. Crippen had murdered his second wife, Belle Elmore, a music hall singer, earlier that year.

Thanks to subsequent accounts, Elmore has developed a reputation as a bullying and domineering woman. But Rubenhold refutes this narrative, humanising her and removing some of the emphasis away from Crippen. She also incorporates various other figures into the tale, including a lengthy chapter devoted to Crippen's first wife, Charlotte.

While she does delve deep into the murder itself, Rubenhold makes sure to fully flesh out the story and relationships beforehand: Elmore's disappearance does not occur until page 169 of this mammoth 410-page book (plus supplementary material). Prior to this Rubenhold fully explores Elmore's upbringing, her life as a music hall singer and her tumultuous relationship with Crippen.

It is Rubehold's ability to reframe the typical narrative of the Crippen case that makes *Story of a Murder* such a refreshing read. And it's almost a statement of intent that it is Elmore, rather than Crippen, who takes centre stage on the cover. ***CM***

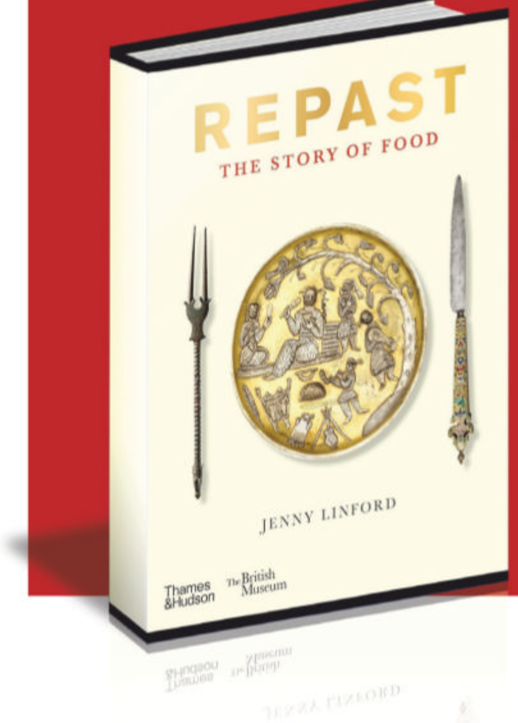
★★★★☆


BY THE AUTHOR OF THE #1 SUNDAY TIMES BESTSELLING THE FIVE
STORY OF A MURDER
HALLIE RUBENHOLD
THE WIVES, THE MISTRESS AND DOCTOR CRIPPEN

REPAST: THE STORY OF FOOD

Tuck in to this multi-course feast of history

Author: Jenny Linford **Publisher:** Thames & Hudson **Price:** £30 **Released:** 24 April



As Jenny Linford points out in her introduction to *Repast: The Story of Food*, the need to eat is one of the most unifying elements of humanity. We might enjoy different cuisines and have access to different ingredients, but we all have to eat. This wonderfully illustrated book looks to break down the evolution of that practice from the days of hunting and gathering to the modern era of restaurants and takeaways.

As we progress through this journey, *Repast* offers fantastic objects from across the world collected by the British Museum, such as an Ice Age engraving of a reindeer from France, a Japanese woodcut print of fishermen and a mosaic of a chicken from Halicarnassus (modern Turkey). These objects that celebrate different food or sources of food help to illustrate the historical importance of what we eat and how it both informs and becomes a touchstone of different cultures.

Linford really lets these artefacts, objects and art tell a lot of the story of our relationship with food. Having them all collected together like this helps to elevate our understanding of just how integral meals have been to different peoples across time. As armies marched on their stomach and cities were one missed meal away from revolution, food really is at the heart of so much of human endeavour. This book, written in collaboration with British Museum experts, is a wonderfully accessible and insightful read to be savoured. ***JG***

★★★★★

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HISTORY OF WAR RECOMMENDS…

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Oathbreakers

Author Matthew Gabriele & David M Perry
Price £25 **Publisher** HarperCollins

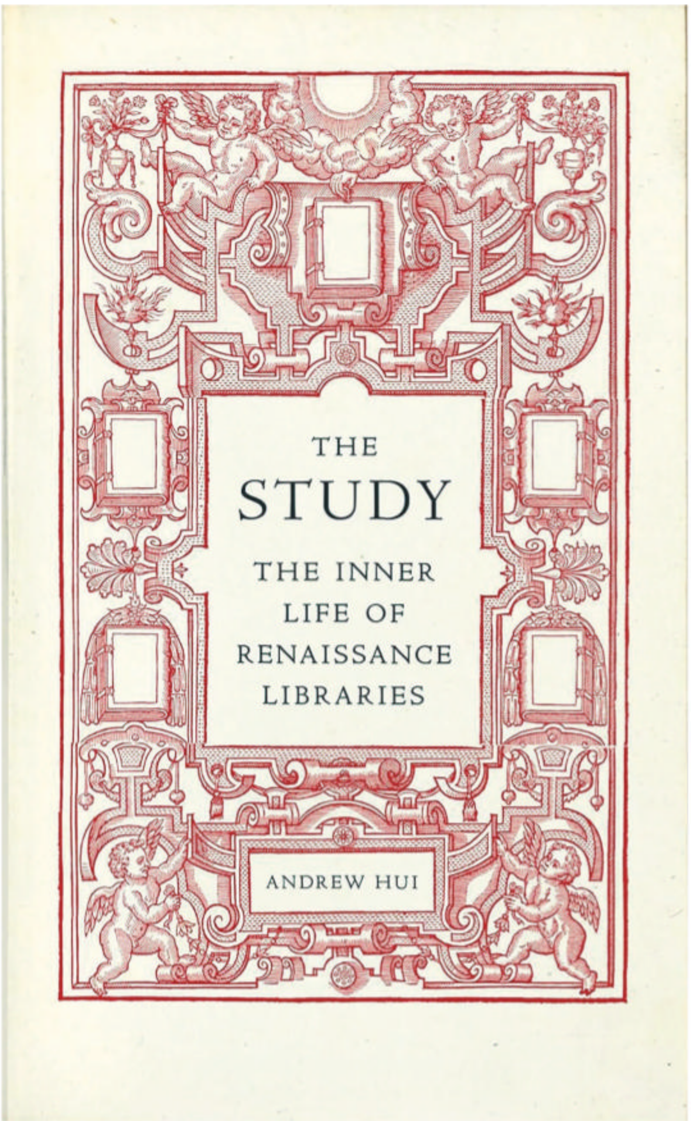
This book tells the history of the civil conflict between the descendents of Charlemagne that tore apart the Carolingian Empire, while also revealing how historians interrogate their sources to try to get at the real story of what actually happened. An excellent breakdown of the events and insight into how experts come to their conclusions.

THE STUDY:

THE INNER LIFE OF RENAISSANCE LIBRARIES

A fascinating exploration of historical spaces of learning and reflection

Author: Andrew Hui **Publisher:** Princeton University Press **Price:** £25 **Released:** Out now



"This is a book about bibliophiles for bibliophiles"

Early humanist scholar Francesco Petrarch's description of his personal retreat from the world at Vaucluse, near Avignon, is as beautiful as it is moving: "Here I gather all the friends I now have or did have, not only those who have proved themselves through intimate contact and who have lived with me, but also those who died many centuries ago, known to me only through their writings, wherein I marvel at their accomplishments and their spirits or at their customs and lives or at their eloquence and genius." It is this idea, of communication across time and place in the search for knowledge and self improvement, that characterises Andrew Hui's *The Study: The Inner Life of Renaissance Libraries*.

Hui, an associate professor of humanities at Yale-NUS College, Singapore, explores the history of the studiolo, or 'little study', as a private space of learning and examination. During the Renaissance, a time of evolving intellectual movements, these library spaces were extremely important. As Hui explains, libraries were at the heart of Renaissance movements such as "Renaissance humanism, the Reformation, the rise of science, the discovery of the 'New World', the decline of magic [and] the birth of the individual". As such, the studiolo spaces explored in *The Study* take on an almost sacred quality; they are much more than just a room with books. From cells in monasteries to personal rooms for reading and reflection in homes and grand palaces, the Renaissance libraries of *The Study* are all just as significant. Hui also demonstrates that the personal Renaissance libraries were an expression of oneself: a private hideaway from the turbulent world where one could expand the mind and converse with those who came before. But, as Hui so brilliantly explains, these spaces were not only a place for wonder, questioning and self-improvement, but also potentially an environment that induced obsession and madness. Thus, the book is split into two primary sections: bibliophilia and bibliomania.

What makes *The Study* such a brilliant read is Hui's exceptional style and flair. Throughout its pages, his wit and playfulness shine through, as does his passion for his work and his own bibliophilic tendencies. Though many of the individuals discussed in *The Study* are well-known historical figures, Hui's excellent storytelling skills and deep research make them come alive in a new and fresh way.

At times, however, the sheer amount of information conveyed can feel overwhelming. This book does not just look at real studiolo spaces but also stunning works of art (images of which are provided in the book) and imagined libraries in the works of writers like William Shakespeare, Miguel de Cervantes and Christopher Marlowe. Nevertheless, all these elements come together to create an incredible work that recognises the importance of Renaissance libraries and their enduring legacy. A delightful read that invokes feelings of escapism and intrigue, *The Study* is a book about bibliophiles for bibliophiles. ***ES***

★★★★☆

HISTORY VS HOLLYWOOD

Fact versus fiction on the silver screen

A COMPLETE UNKNOWN

Director: James Mangold **Starring:** Timothée Chalamet, Monica Barbaro, Edward Norton **Country:** USA **Year:** 2024

Does this biopic of the legendary singer handle with care? Or does it leave the facts blowin' in the wind?

C

VERDICT: Playing to its own tune, *A Complete Unknown* sacrifices numerous facts in the name of entertainment.

01 The film depicts the rise of Bob Dylan (Chalamet), with Elle Fanning playing his fictitious girlfriend Sylvie Russo. Her character is based on Suze Rotolo, with the real-life Dylan requesting the name change. As in the movie, they had an on-off relationship.

02 A key relationship in the film is Dylan's friendship with folk singer Pete Seeger (Norton). Dylan appears on Seeger's TV show but in reality he was never a guest. This sequence also features alcoholic blues musician Jesse Moffette – a fictional creation.

03 Boyd Holbrook plays Johnny Cash, who encourages Dylan throughout his career. They were friends and did correspond with each other. It's likely Cash is given an exaggerated role in the film, as he wasn't present at the 1965 Newport Folk Festival.

04 The climax of the film is the Newport Folk Festival, where Dylan plays an electric guitar. The moment when an audience member calls him "Judas!" and he responds by instructing his band to "play f***ing loud" actually occurred in Manchester in 1966.

05 At Newport, Seeger in particular resents Dylan's heavier electric style. In reality, he said his issues were to do with the PA system obscuring Dylan's lyrics as opposed to his music. He also never swung an axe, only stating: "If I had an axe I'd cut the cable."

All images: © Alamy

Did you know?
You can customise these cookies with various spices, raisins, oats, nuts and more.

Ingredients

- 2 tbsp of margarine
- 4 tbsp of sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract (or other flavouring, such as almond)
- 8 tbsp grated carrot
- 12 tbsp of self-raising flour

Main image: © Alamy
Inset image: © Getty Images

CARROT COOKIES

RATION-FRIENDLY WWII TREATS, BRITAIN, 1940s

In a time of food rationing in Great Britain during the Second World War, carrots were often used as an alternative sweetener for recipes because sugar was harder to come by. Carrots were readily available and relatively cheap. From this we most famously got carrot cake, which is a rare survivor from this era of enforced frugality that has continued to be enjoyed without too much variation, save for the fact that you can now use frosting and icing, which was considered wasteful in the 1940s.

As is widely known, carrots were the focus of a lot of wartime propaganda. As well as being a good food source during the conflict, they were also used by the British government to throw German intelligence off the scent of radar technology. Poster campaigns suggested that night vision was improved from eating carrots. It's not actually clear that the Germans fell for this ruse, but the British public seemed to lap it up. Even if it wasn't entirely believed, it was a good excuse to get children to eat their vegetables. The vitamin A in carrots is also good for eye health (but doesn't improve vision), so there was a whiff of truth to the propaganda.

METHOD

01 Preheat your oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7 (200°C for fan-assisted ovens).

02 Line a baking tray with grease-proof paper.

03 In a large bowl, mix the margarine and sugar together until the mixture is light and fluffy. You can also use a mixer to do this. Use a vegetable-based margarine to make this recipe vegan-friendly.

04 Mix in the vanilla extract (or alternative flavouring) and the grated carrot until everything is well combined.

05 Gently fold in the flour until it is also fully incorporated into the mixture.

06 Spoon the mixture onto the grease-proof paper to form your cookies. You should have enough mixture to make six. Additionally, you can sprinkle a little sugar on top at this stage.

07 Bake in the oven for about 18 minutes until they take on a golden colour.

NEXT MONTH THE TYRANNICAL REIGN OF NERO ON SALE 15 MAY

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"A dynamic and engrossing read – Buttar captures the drama and detail of one of the most important campaigns of the Second World War."

DAVID STAHEL
Author of *The Battle for Moscow*

BAGRATION
1944
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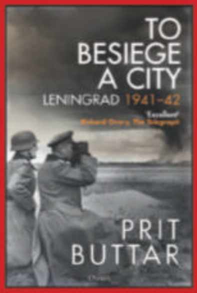
SOVIET
OFFENSIVE
PRIT
BUTTAR
OSPREY

This is a gripping account of one of World War II's most crucial yet often overlooked campaigns.

HERO
CITY
LENINGRAD 1943–44
PRIT
BUTTAR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A CITY
LENINGRAD 1941–42
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